

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON DECENCY OF EMPLOYMENT BETWEEN
SPECIALIZED VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND MEISTER HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATES BASED ON THE ILO DECENT WORK AGENDA**

By

MOON, Ahlum

THESIS

Submitted to
KDI School of Public Policy and Management
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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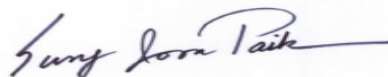
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ABSTRACT

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON DECENCY OF EMPLOYMENT BETWEEN SPECIALIZED VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND MEISTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES BASED ON THE ILO DECENT WORK AGENDA

By

Ahlum Moon

The main purpose of this paper is to examine and compare between employment of conventional and new vocational high school graduates based on the ‘Decent Work’ agenda proposed by International Labor Organization (ILO) and the existing literature. In comparing between the employment decency of vocational high school graduates, this study seeks solutions to challenges that the existing vocational high schools have been facing and opportunities to improve the vocational program and policy arrangements. Therefore, this paper provides the current employment situation of the vocational high school graduates and further suggests policy recommendations in terms of youth employment.

The data of the two groups who graduated from ‘Specialized vocational high schools’ (conventional) and ‘Meister high schools’ (new) are drawn from ‘High School Graduates Employment Survey’ (HSGES) and analyzed according to the eight selected indicators: ‘Employment Opportunities’, ‘Adequate earnings’, ‘Decent hours’, ‘Stability and security of work’, ‘Social protection’, ‘Social dialogue and workplace relations’, ‘Fair treatment in employment’, and ‘Job Satisfaction’.

This research discovers that the quantity and quality (‘decency’) of employment

for Meister high school graduates is better than that of Specialized high school graduates. In addition, gender differences in the quantity and quality ('decency') of employment are examined; female graduates in each group show better decency of employment than their male counterparts.

As there were the first-time graduates from Meister high schools in 2013, a follow-up survey of the vocational high school completers should continue so as to make greater progress in vocational education programs, which will help to promote the vocational education program for future vocational high school candidates and develop a career pathway into youth employment. Further studies should be investigated on what led the differences of decency in employment between Meister high school graduates and Specialized vocational high school graduates, and what improvement should be applied to Specialized vocational high school programs.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HSGES	High School Graduates Employment Survey
ILO	International Labor Organization
KEIS	Korea Employment Information Service
KRIVET	Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training
MH	Meister high school
SVH	Specialized high school

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1. Introduction

1.1. Statement of the Problem

-Challenges for vocational education schools

When industrialization led by Korean government began in the 1960s, the Korean government promoted an export oriented and labor intensive industry, and afterwards heavy chemical industry in the 1970s. As the government took the lead to nurture a skilled workforce through vocational education and training during that time, many young talented people attended vocational education and training, and vocational high schools served to equip the young people with knowledge and skills in immediate needs for the nation's economic growth.

In the 1980s, the industry focus was shifted to a technology-based industry and the demand for high-skilled labor increased. Accordingly, vocational high schools had to improve their curricular opt for the new industry demand. And, as a knowledge-based industry was emerging in the 1990s, the demand for highly educated manpower and experts in a relevant industry increased. However, vocational high schools failed to respond to the rapid changes of the industry's demand and could not offer students prospects for higher education and employment, which created inefficiency at the local, national and individual level such as skills mismatch and labor shortages.

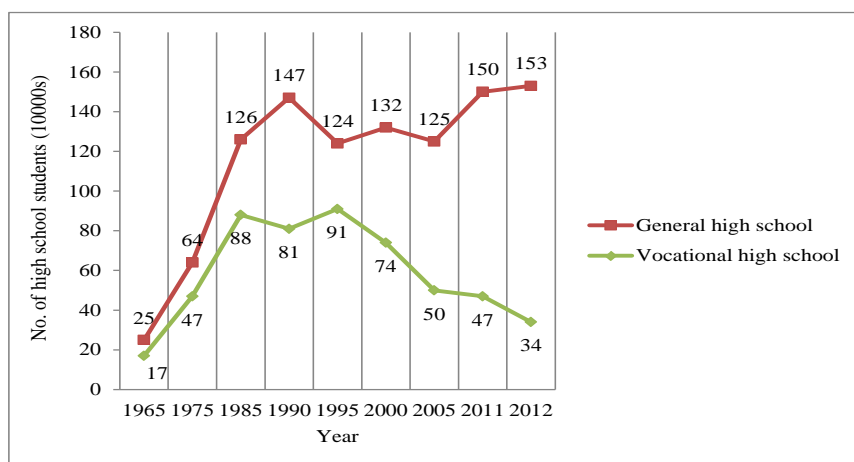
Moreover, Korean people have excessive aspirations for higher level of study. As higher education has become more affordable and accessible, the growing number of students tends to go to university. As a result, the university enrolment rate of Korea is one of the highest among OECD countries. In the meantime, entering a vocational high school has been considered an undesirable option for students whose academic performances are not good enough to enter a general high school. All these

factors discussed above have influenced the decreasing enrolment rate of vocational schools and deteriorating situation of employment for vocational high school graduates.¹

1.2. Purpose of the Study and Value of the Study

In 2010, a new type of vocational high schools called ‘Meister high school’ was established in the hope that it could revive a vocational education so that vocational high schools could provide students with a successful pathway into decent employment. As there were the first-time Meister high school graduates in 2013, this study attempts to compare employment between new (Meister high schools) and conventional vocational high school (Specialized vocational high schools) graduates based on the decent work agenda of the ILO (International Labor Organization).

This paper provides information on the current employment situation of Meister high school graduates and Specialized vocational high school graduates, and its comparison. In comparing between the employment decency of vocational high



<The number of high school students from 1965 to 2012>

Young-bum Park and Jisun Chung, *Vocational Education and Training in Korea* (Seoul: Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training, 2013), 20.

school graduates, this study seeks solutions to challenges that the existing vocational high schools have been facing and opportunities to improve the vocational program and policy arrangements.

1.3. Research questions

This study aims to answer the following research question in a series of steps:

Research question:

“Who of those between Meister high school (hereafter, MH) graduates and Specialized vocational high school (hereafter, SVH) graduates is more likely to be employed in decent work?”

To solve this question,

First, identify a set of statistical indicators that can be used to define employment as ‘decent work’ in a context of Korean labor market and economy.

Second, apply those indicators to employment in which MH and SVH graduates are employed.

Third, measure the percentage of employment that meets a decent level of each identified indicator in each group of graduates and then investigate employment of which group satisfies more decent work indicators.

Fourth, find a relationship between decent work and a school type.

1.4. Methodology

This article argues decency of employment in which MH and SVH graduates are employed using 2013 High School Graduates Employment Survey (HSGES) conducted by the Ministry of Employment and Labor, and the Korea Employment

Information Service (KEIS). The selected data are analyzed by using frequency and percentage statistical tools such as STATA/IC 13.1 and Microsoft Excel 2010.

1.5. Structure of the Study

The paper is organized as follows. Chapter 2 is devoted to explaining vocational education school systems in Korea. Further, definition of decent work and statistical measurement principles of decent work are described, and then the main literature about decent work in a Korea context is summarized. Chapter 3 discusses generated statistical indicators to measure decency of various aspects of employment of MH and SVH graduates. Chapter 4 focuses on the results. Chapter 5 concludes and suggests policy recommendations and future studies.

2. Theoretical background and literature review

2.1. Vocational high schools in a Korean education system

2.1.1. Overview of Korean education system

The Korean schooling system is based on a 6-3-3-4 single track system as illustrated in Table 2.1. Six years of elementary school and three years of middle school are compulsory. As students generally attend elementary and junior schools within their own neighborhood, they do not have much choice of school selection for elementary and junior schools. After nine years of compulsory schooling, students have a variety of choices for high school. Admission and screening processes of high schools differ across school systems. Some schools use a computer lottery system to place students and some others accept students according to their previous academic performance, auditions or entrance exam results.

Table 2.1 Korean education system

Year	The Structure of educational system in Korea			
4 yrs.	University (4 yrs.)			College (2-3 yrs.)
3 yrs.	1. Autonomous private/public high Schools (Article 76-2, 91-3 & 4) ²	2. General high School (Article 76-2) 2.1 Comprehensive high school ³	3. Special purpose high school -arts and music -athletics -foreign language -sciences (Article 76-2, 90) 3.1 Meister high School (Article 76-2, 90)	4. Specialized Vocational high School -agricultural -technical -industrial -commercial -fishery -home economics (Article 76-2, 91)
3 yrs.	Middle school (3 yrs., compulsory)			
6yrs.	Elementary school (6 yrs., compulsory)			

² Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

³ The shaded schools are vocational high schools.

The 2010 elementary and secondary education Act describes four different types of high schools in Korea (See Table 2.1):⁴

-1. Autonomous private/public high schools

-2. General high schools

-3. Special purpose high schools

(Note that MH are under this category even though their main goal is to lead students to acquire the practical skills and knowledge necessary for employment in a specific occupation or industry while other Special purpose high schools prepare students for university education.)

-4. Specialized (Vocational) high schools

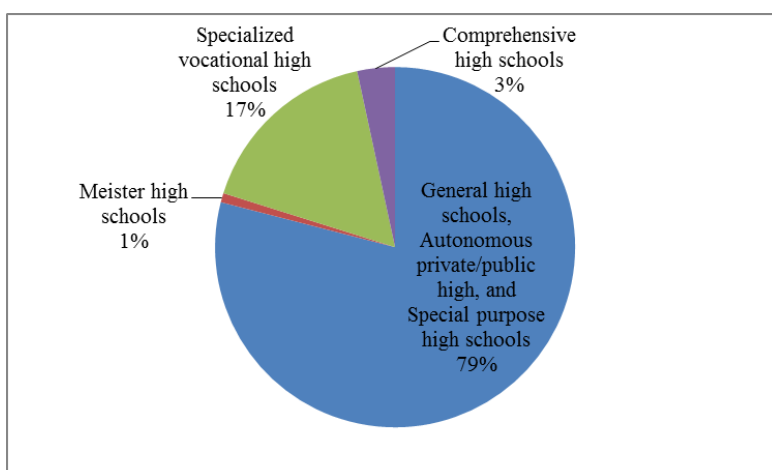
Autonomous private/public, General and Special purpose high schools offer students advanced general education and elective courses, and students choose courses based on their intended university major. MH, SVH and comprehensive high schools provide students with the education required for a specific profession in fields of agriculture, Industry & technology, commerce, home economics, fishery and so forth.

As of 2013, there are 397,257 students in 613 vocational high schools accounting for 21 percent of total high school students in Figure 2.1.⁵

⁴ Byeongu Kang et al., *2013 handbook of Vocational high schools (Specialized Vocational school, Comprehensive school. Meister School)* (Seoul: Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training, 2013), 3.

⁵ Byeongu Kang et al., *2013 handbook of Vocational high schools (Specialized Vocational school, Comprehensive school. Meister School)* (Seoul: Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training, 2013), 4.

Figure 2.1 Percentage of students by high school type⁶



2.1.2. Specialized vocational high school (SVH)

The Decree of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act prescribes that the objective of Specialized vocational high schools is “to provide education to foster workforce in specific areas and experience based education such as field training etc. for students with similar talents, aptitudes, and abilities.”⁷

As part of ‘High school vocational education advancement measure’, all the various names for conventional vocational high schools have been renamed to ‘Specialized vocational high school’ since June 29th, 2010.⁸ As the title of the measure implies, the government tried to revive and reform vocational high schools by reducing the number of vocational high schools but providing more resources to schools with potential and competitiveness. It is expected that SVH educate students with skills readily used for industry, which can be a solution for two major issues in

⁶ Ibid., 5.

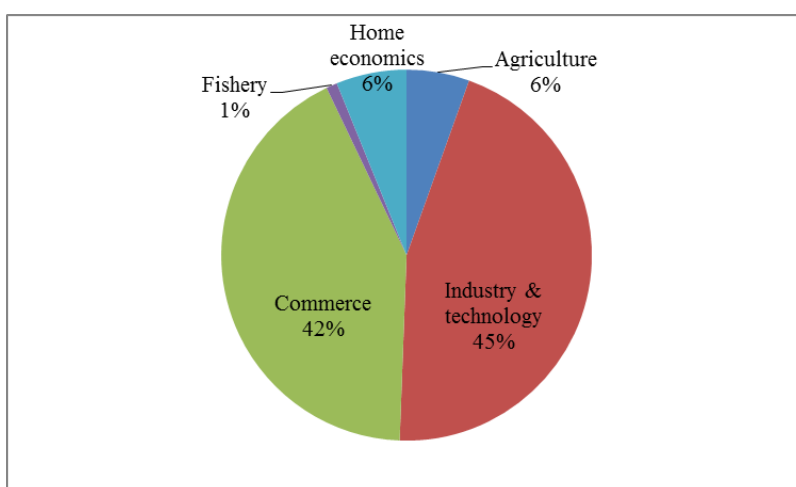
⁷ Young-bum Park and Jisun Chung, *Vocational Education and Training in Korea* (Seoul: Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training, 2013), 41.

⁸ Jinho Jo, “A study on Policy Evaluation of Vocational Education in Meister High Schools” (PhD diss., Inha University, 2013), 21.

the Korean youth labor market: skills mismatch and high youth unemployment.

SVH offer education and training with the major five different industrial focuses: agriculture, industry & technology, commerce, fishery, and home economics. 45 percent and 42 percent of the students in SVH study in fields of industry & technology and commerce respectively (See Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 Percentage of Specialized vocational high school students by major⁹



Regarding the employment rate in 2013, among 105,132 SVH students eligible to work, 40 percent of SVH students are in employment and 41.4 percent of them are in higher education.¹⁰ In recent years, although the number of students going to higher education decreases, more SVH students still choose to attend a college or university instead of entering employment directly.

⁹ Byeongu Kang et al., *2013 handbook of Vocational high schools (Specialized Vocational school, Comprehensive school. Meister School)* (Seoul: Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education & training, 2013), 4.

¹⁰ Byeongu Kang et al., *2013 handbook of Vocational high schools (Specialized Vocational school, Comprehensive school. Meister School)* (Seoul: Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education & training, 2013), 9 & 163. *No. of graduates eligible for work= No. of high school graduate students- No. of graduate students in a military duty

	No. of schools	No. of students	No. of graduates	No. of graduates eligible for work	Graduates in employment (%)	Graduates in education (%)
SVH	470	319,063	105,678	105,132	40.9	41.4
MH	35	16,164	5,422	5,314	74.1	13.9

2.1.3. Meister high school (MH)

Under the president Lee administration in 2008, the Korean government took an initiative called ‘High School Diversification 300 project’ to reform and diversify education systems. As part of the project, some selected SVH were designated as MH in 2010 and received government support to upgrade their facilities and school programs. As of 2013, there are a total of 35 Meister high schools.

In February 2013, MH had 5422 first-time graduates. Among 5314 students eligible to work, 74.1 percent of MH students are in employment and 13.9 percent of them are in higher education.¹¹

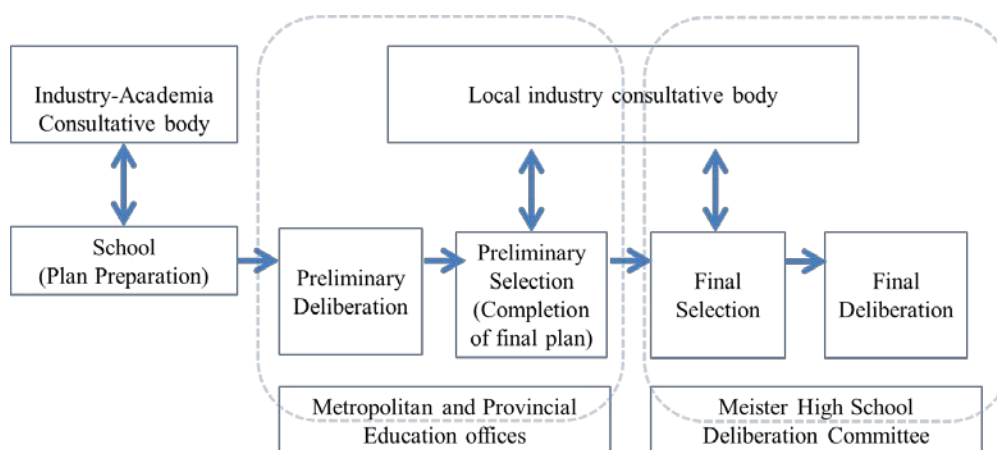
Figure 2.3 depicts a selection process of MH. Ministries and government departments consult to identify the demand of certain industries in a region. And then, superintendents of education in cities and provinces consider that which industries should be promoted in their region, which educational program and training should be offered to meet the industry’s requirements, and what kind of basic conditions and standards schools should have. And then, the MH deliberation committee consisting of representatives of the government, industries and educational experts, and business circles choose SVH and then the Ministry of Education designates them as MH.¹²

¹¹ Byeongu Kang et al., *2013 handbook of Vocational high schools (Specialized Vocational school, Comprehensive school, Meister School)* (Seoul: Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education & training, 2013), 9 & 163. *No. of graduates eligible for work= No. of high school graduate students- No. of graduate students in a military duty

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¹² Young-bum Park and Jisun Chung, *Vocational Education and Training in Korea* (Seoul: Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training, 2013), 47.

Figure 2.3 Recommendation and deliberation process for Meister high schools¹³



Designated schools receive a 2.5 million USD grant for one-year preparation from the Ministry of Education for creating, upgrading, and maintaining school facilities and an industry specific and customized curriculum.¹⁴ Plus, the selected schools must actively engage with their local or national businesses and facilitate their participation in the school advisory committee, the curriculum operation committee, and curriculum design committee. When SVH fulfill these requirements, they will be chosen as MH.

In addition, when students enter MH, they can have several benefits. First, male students can postpone military duty for four years while in employment. And, during the military service, their assigned duty will be related to their specialty and beneficial to their career development. Second, students who consider further education relevant to their vocational studies can go to tertiary education through the special college admission system for MH graduates after three years of employment. Third,

¹³ Ibid., 48.

¹⁴ Ibid., 47.

opportunities for training and overseas studies are provided. Fourth, students are entitled to a tuition fee waiver and scholarships. Fifth, students can use common school facilities such as a dormitory and labs, and even other facilities in a company associated with the school.¹⁵

MH have more autonomy and flexibility of operation than other high schools so that they can design lesson plans that are suited for the needs of industry. Furthermore, only those who have a teacher's certificate are eligible to be a principal of school, however, those who do not have a teacher's certificate but much experience in fields of industry can be appointed as a principal in MH through the open recruitment system.¹⁶ The principals and teachers can therefore build a close networking with businesses for cooperation and mutual benefits.

Thus, there is a committee that evaluates performance of the school on a regular basis. The committee comprises the principal or vice-principal, chief teacher, a supervisor of the province or metropolis, a leader of the center for Meister schools of KRIVET, and a representative of the Ministry of Education.¹⁷ When the schools fail to meet the standard in employment rate, curriculum, and so forth, three years after establishment, the government takes punitive measures such as a change of the principal, subsidy reduction, or removal of the designation as MH.

¹⁵ Young-bum Park and Jisun Chung, *Vocational Education and Training in Korea* (Seoul: Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training, 2013), 50.

¹⁶ Ibid., 51.

¹⁷ Ibid., 52.

2.2. Definition and statistical indicators of Decent work

2.2.1. Definition and implications of Decent work

2.2.1.1. Definition of Decent work

In the International Labor Conference in 1999, ILO Director General Juan Somavia first introduced Decent Work and described it as “opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity”.¹⁸ Ever since, Decent Work has become the central objective and the organizing framework for ILO activities. Further, the 2007 ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) High-level Segment Ministerial Declaration stressed decent work opportunities for women and young people for relevant national and international policies as well as national development strategies.¹⁹

As the ILO and many other experts believe that decent work contributes to high and sustained economic and social development, there has been considerable on-going research to develop a set of statistical indicators to identify and measure decent work. Among many related studies, this chapter extensively draws from the ILO working paper No.2 in 2002.²⁰

In the ILO working paper No.2, the definition of decent work explicitly represents the six conceptual dimensions: 1. Opportunities for work, 2. work in conditions of freedom, 3. productive work, 4. equity in work, 5. security at work, and 6. dignity at work.²¹ The paper explains that work²² should be available for all

¹⁸ ILO, “Decent Work: Report of the Director General” (paper presented at the International Labor Conference, 87th Session, Geneva, Switzerland, June 1999).

¹⁹ United Nations: Report of the Economic and Social Council for the 2007 *Ministerial Declaration of the High-level Segment*, adopted at the 62nd Session of the General Assembly, New York, 10 July 2007 (A/62/3).

²⁰ Richard Anker et al., Measuring Decent Work with Statistical Indicators, Working Paper No.2. International Labor Office (2002), 2.

²¹ Ibid., 2.

persons who desire to work and have a capacity to work (1)²³, and people should have freedom to choose to work and join a workers' union (2, 6). It further describes that decent work should enable workers to be productive so that they can sustain development and competitiveness of enterprises and countries as well as their own living (3). Workers should have fair treatments and be treated with respect at work (4, 6), and should be able to have ability to balance between work, personal and family life (5). Lastly, workers should be provided with adequate financial and other protection in cases of health and other contingencies through decent work (5).

2.2.1.2. Implications of Decent work²⁴

The implications of decent work indicate both universality and relativity. Decent work agenda applies to everybody regardless of a country's level of development and whether he or she works in the formal or informal sector but the decency level can vary. For instance, everybody agrees that a decent pay is one of the most important elements that constitutes the decent work agenda, but the level of pay considered to be decent differs across countries.

Furthermore, the decent work agenda deals with the actual situation that most vulnerable people face and aims at improving the situation of those people. Therefore, it focuses more on distributions and measuring the situation of the disadvantaged group than that of average people, and tries to measure actual conditions and changes over time so as to achieve the goal of decent work.

²² The concept of work here includes all forms of economic activities such as unpaid family work, wage employment, and self-employment in both the formal and informal sectors.

²³ The number refers to each conceptual dimension of decent work.

²⁴ Richard Anker et al., Measuring Decent Work with Statistical Indicators, Working Paper No.2. International Labor Office (2002), 3.

Last, due to data availability and relative importance of decent work aspects in each country, a core set of ILO decent work indicators will be minimal. Hence, it is encouraged that each country and technical programs can evolve additional indicators reflecting their urgent needs, resources and priorities.

2.2.2. Statistical indicators of Decent work

The ILO working paper No. 2 suggests the eleven groups of indicators of decent work and identifies a set of statistical indicators in each group in Table 2.2. The carefully selected statistical indicators represent the six dimensions of decent work mentioned in the previous section and are believed to provide measurement of a level of decency of work.

Table 2.2 Summary of suggested decent work indicators²⁵

Six Conceptual dimensions of Decent work	Eleven Substantive elements of the Decent Work Agenda by Anker et al., 2002	Statistical indicators
1. Opportunities for work	1. Employment opportunities	1.Labor force participation rate 2.Employment-population ratio 3.Unemployment rate 4.Youth unemployment rate 5.Time-related underemployment rate 6.Share of wage employment in non-agricultural employment 7.Female share of non-agricultural wage employment
2. Work in conditions of freedom	2. Unacceptable work	1. Children not in school by employment status(percent by age) 2. Children in wage employment or self-employment activity rate(percent by age)
3. Productive work	3. Adequate earnings and productive work	1. Inadequate pay rate(percent of employed below 1/2 of median or an absolute minimum, whichever is greater, by status in employment) 2. Average earnings in selected occupations 3. Excessive hours of work 4. Time-related underemployment rate 5. Employees with recent job training(percent with job training during last 12 months provided or paid for by employer or state)
	4. Decent hours	1. Excessive hours of work (percent of employed,

²⁵ Richard Anker et al., Measuring Decent Work with Statistical Indicators, Working Paper No.2. International Labor Office (2002), 71.

		by status in employment) 2. Time-related underemployment rate (percent of employed population working less than hours threshold, but available and wanting to work additional hours).
4. Security at work	5. Stability and security of work	1. Tenure less than one year (% of employed persons who have held their main job/work for less than one year, by age, by status in employment) 2. Temporary work (percent of employees who classify their jobs as temporary)
	6. Safe work environment	1. Fatal injury rate (per 100,000 employees) 2. Labor inspectors (inspectors per 100,000 employees and per 100,000 covered employees) 3. Occupational injury insurance coverage (percent of employees covered by insurance) 4. Excessive hours of work
	7. Social protection	1. Public social security expenditure (% of GDP, separately for total, health services, and old-age pensions) 2. Public expenditure on needs-based cash income support (% of GDP) 3. Beneficiaries of cash income support (% of poor) 4. Share of population over 65 years benefiting from a pension 5. Share of economically active population contributing to a pension fund 6. Average monthly pension (% of median/minimum earnings) 7. Occupational injury insurance coverage
5. Equity and 6. dignity at work	8. Balancing work and family life	1. Employment rate for women with children under compulsory school age (ratio to the rate for all women aged 20-49) 2. Excessive hours of work
	9. Fair treatment in employment	1. Occupational segregation by sex, (% of non-agricultural employment in male-dominated and in female-dominated occupations and index of dissimilarity) 2. Female share of employment in managerial and administrative occupations (ratio to female share of non-agricultural employment) 3. Share of women in non-agricultural wage employment 4. Female/male wage or earnings ratio, selected occupations 5. Female/male ratios or differences for other indicators
	10. Social dialogue and workplace relations	1. Union density rate Collective wage bargaining coverage rate 2. Strikes and lockouts (per 1000 employees)
	11. Economic and social context of decent work	1. Output per employed person (PPP level) 2. Growth of output per employed person (total and manufacturing) 3. Inflation (consumer prices where available) 4. Education of adult population (adult literacy rate, adult secondary school graduation rate) 5. Composition of employment by economic sector (agriculture, industry, services) 6. Income inequality (ratio of top 10 % to bottom 10 %, income or consumption)

		7. Poverty (% of population subsisting on less than \$1/day or less than \$2/day) 8. Informal economy employment (% of non-agricultural or urban employment)
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This paper, however, reviews only seven groups of indicators in bold out of the eleven in Table 2.2. Such choice of indicators needs to be made due to data availability, and the generally preferred and accepted concept of decent work in the Korean context.

In addition to the seven indicators, the job satisfaction indicator is added. The value of job satisfaction data is a direct way to evaluate one's decency of work, demonstrates subjective but important aspects of work, and complements objective information on wages, hours, and so forth.²⁶

The seven groups of indicators and their discussion are briefly introduced in the following.

1. Employment opportunities²⁷

It is important to know how much work is available for people who have an ability and desire to work before discussing its decency. Therefore, employment situation should be discussed as an essential element of decent work agenda before any other decent work indicators are identified.

2. Adequate earnings and productive work²⁸

²⁶ Joseph A. Ritter and Richard Anker, "Good jobs, bad jobs: Workers' evaluations in five countries," *International Labor Review* 141, no. 4 (2002), 331-332.

²⁷ Richard Anker et al., *Measuring Decent Work with Statistical Indicators*, Working Paper No.2. International Labor Office (2002), 9-16.

²⁸ Ibid., 22-25.

The main reason why people work is to earn income for their economic well-being as well as their households'. In addition to a decent rate of pay as a basis element of decent work, one dynamic aspect of decent work is acknowledged that work should be productive so that workers can continue to secure income. Therefore, they should be able to improve their work performance and income through training and further education.

3. Decent hours²⁹

Excessive hours and atypical hours can damage physical and mental health of employees and result in imbalance between work and family life. Excessive hours can indicate insufficient hourly pay. Short hours can be a signal of insufficient job opportunities, which can be termed as time-related underemployment.

4. Stability and security of work³⁰

Job loss is a serious matter for most people, and affects workers and their households in many ways. Losing a job involves economic costs such as loss of pay, inaccessibility to pension and insurance, and disruption of human capital accumulation. Furthermore, the whole household may have to relocate to find a job, which can cause great stress for all members of the family.

5. Fair treatment in employment³¹

Fair treatment in employment can be expressed as equality of opportunity in employment and occupation, and equal pay for work of equal value regardless of race,

²⁹ Ibid., 29-34.

³⁰ Ibid., 34-38.

³¹ Ibid., 42-44.

color, sex, religion, age, disability, disease, political opinion...etc. Furthermore, it also includes absence of harassment or violence, some degree of autonomy, and fair handling of grievances and conflicts at work. Currently, proposed indicators for fair treatment mainly focus on differential treatment between men and women.

6. Social protection³²

Good social protection is a defining characteristic of decent work for a basic human right and social cohesion, social justice and human dignity, especially, in an event of contingencies such as poverty, illness, unemployment, old-age, and disability.

7. Social dialogue and workplace relations³³

All the aspects discussed so far should be recognized and followed by relevant action. For that matter, employees should have freedom of association to defend or protect their rights at workplace and be able to present collective opinion in decision making process for their working conditions.

2.3. Literature review

In this section, the main existing literature about decent work is introduced. Since decent work agenda reflects socio-economic situation and a level of development in a country, it has to be understood within a country-specific context. Korean literature is therefore intensively reviewed here so as to have a picture of what is considered to be decent work in the Korean society (See Table 2.3).

So far the Korean literature tend to have paid more attention on ‘quality job’

³² Ibid., 52-55.

³³ Ibid., 55-58.

or ‘good job or bad job’ discussion than the decent work agenda. Hence, discussion on quality job is also briefly summarized. Although the two discussions have similarities in measurement but they have a different focus. The former focuses on income, social status or job satisfaction while the latter focuses on workers’ rights.³⁴

In light of workers’ rights, the decent work agenda has been used to explain employment of certain occupations or marginalized groups. As this research is about employment situation of vocational high school graduates and their employment situation and prospects are the bleakest among youth population³⁵, the decent work agenda is better suited to explain the issue for vocational high school graduates than the quality job discussion.

In this respect, this research can be meaningful in the sense that any paper that explains employment of high school graduates based on the decent work agenda is rare. Besides, since there were the first-time MH graduates in 2013, not much research has been studied on labor market outcomes of MH graduates and any related topics.

Phang and Lee categorized employment into a good job or a bad job and examined characteristics of the employees who have obtained a good job or bad job by using an index.³⁶ They developed an aggregated index of three variables: income, occupational status and job satisfaction, and the index have been also used

³⁴ Ok-Geum, Choi, “An exploratory study on the Decent Job: the Definition of the Decent Job and Its Characteristics,” *The Korean Social Security Association* 22, no. 2 (2006):231.

³⁵ Sang-Hyun Park, “A Study on characteristics of Specialized vocational high school graduates based on the ‘Decent Job’ perspective and policy implications,” (paper presented at the 2013 Korea Employment Information Service (KEIS) conference, Seoul, Korea, June 4, 2013.

³⁶ Hanam Phang and Sang-Ho Lee, “A study on Conceptualization and measurement of ‘Good Job’,” *Korean Journal of Sociology* 40, no.1 (2006): 93-126.

in other papers by Choi₍₁₎ and Byon. Choi₍₁₎ identified which factors affected Specialized vocational high school graduates to get a good job and suggested policy recommendations for them.³⁷ In the research on employment quality for the disabled, Byon adopted the index proposed by Phang and added one additional variable: work site accommodation, which specifically refers to ‘modified work assignment’ and ‘altered work schedule’ offered by employers in order to adjust working environment for workers with disability.³⁸

Park examined the quality of employment of university graduates using an index consisting of three variables: income, job security, and decent hours.³⁹ In Park’s recent paper in 2013, he investigated the quality of employment of Specialized vocational high school graduates and applied the same composite index that had been used for his previous work in order to make a comparison of the employment quality between university graduates and Specialized vocational high school graduates.

Choi₍₂₎ argued that a study on decent jobs should be about helping the poor escape poverty and defined a decent job on three aspects: income, job security, and social protection and then identified how much decent jobs satisfying all three aspects existed in the labor market, and characteristics of decent jobs and workers

³⁷ Dong-Son Choi and Jong-Bum Lee, “A study on the Transition of worker graduated from vocational high school to Good Job,” *Journal of vocational education research* 32, no. 1 (2013): 1-21.

³⁸ Kyonghee Byon, “A Study on Conceptualization and Measurement of ‘Quality of Work’ among the Paid Employee of Persons with Disabilities,” *Disability & Employment* 20, no.2 (2010): 189-212.

³⁹ Sang-Hyun Park, “A Study on characteristics of Specialized vocational high school graduates based on the ‘Decent Job’ perspective and policy implications,” (paper presented at the 2013 Korea Employment Information Service (KEIS) conference, Seoul, Korea, June 4, 2013).

employed in decent jobs.⁴⁰

Studies on employment quality of care work have been done by sociologists. Choi⁽³⁾ analyzed quality of elderly care service work by applying eleven indicators: nine indicators are suggested by ILO and the other two indicators are ‘education opportunities to upgrade skills’ and ‘job satisfaction’.⁴¹ Moon examined the quality of job in care work and used five indicators for measurement: adequate pay, labor hours, employment stability, career development, and stability of work environment.⁴² Son used ten indicators to identify the job quality of the disabled using a panel survey of employment for the Disabled.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ok-Geum Choi, “An exploratory study on the Decent Job: the Definition of the Decent Job and Its Characteristics,” *The Korean Social Security Association* 22, no. 2 (2006):227-252.

⁴¹ Hee-Kyung Choi, “A Study on Application of the Concept of ‘Decent Job’ to Direct Care Service Work for the Elderly,” *Korean Journal of Social Welfare Research* 21 (2009): 27-57.

⁴² Soon-Young Moon, “An exploratory study on quality of employment of care workers’,” *Social Welfare Policy* 33 (2008): 207-237.

⁴³ Ji-a Son and Soon-mi Park, “An Exploratory Study on the Quality of Employment for the Disabled Based on the ‘Decent Job’ Perspective,” *Labor Policy Research* 11no.1 (2011): 131-165.

Table 2.3 Review of past proposals of statistical indicators grouped under each decent work dimension used in other literature in order to measure decency of work/ quality of job

Decent work dimensions proposed by ILO		Phang, Hanam 2006	Park, Sanghyun 2013	Choi, Ok-Geum 2006	Choi, Hee-Kyung 2009	Son, Ji-a 2011
No. of the dimensions covered in each research		3	3	3	11	10
Target population		Paid employees with a permanent contract	Specialized high school graduates	Paid and unpaid employees	Elderly care service work/workers	Employees with disability
1	Employment opportunities					
2	Unacceptable work				The reason for working is voluntary or not?	Job suitability -Does this employment give me a chance to utilize my knowledge, skills, and education?
3	Adequate earnings and productive work	Monthly wages	-1/2 of the median of income or more	-1/2 of median of the monthly wage of the total labor or more -2/3 of median of the monthly wage of the total labor	-1/2 of the average monthly income of the total labor or more	-1/2 of the average monthly income of the entire wage employees or more

4	Decent hours		between 36 and 50.6 ⁴⁴ hours per week		10 hours or less per day	20.4 days per month ⁴⁵
5	Stability and security of work		-Are you a regular worker or is your contract on a permanent basis?	-Do you feel secure about your job? (subjective measurement)	Regular worker	-Regular worker and the employment contract is on a permanent basis.
6	combining work and family life				Maternity protection, holiday entitlement is provided?	Paid holiday, maternity leave...etc. are provided.
7	Fair treatment in employment				Any discrimination against gender, religion in terms of promotion, wage, statutory benefits, dismissal...etc.	Any discrimination against disability in terms of access to a job, promotion opportunities, statutory benefits.

⁴⁴ 50.6 is the average working hours of the entire wage employees in 2011.

⁴⁵ Average weekly working hours of the total labor force in the second quarter of 2009.

8	Safe work environment				Work Environment Scale(WES) ⁴⁶	-Is your work environment safe? -Have you experienced any work related injury?
9	Social Protection			-Does your workplace provide the main four insurances?	-Does your workplace provide the main four insurances?	-Does your workplace provide the main four insurances?
10	Social dialogue and workplace relations				Is there a Workers' Union or an organization that represents employees?	-Is there a Workers' union? -Are you a member? -Does a Workers' union represent a voice of the disabled at work properly?
11	Economic and social context of decent work					
Additional indicators		Overall job satisfaction score			Job satisfaction -Are you going to quit or change your job in near future?	-Facilities for the disabled workers are equipped? -Have you ever used any services and supports regarding job search or career development?

⁴⁶ Work Environment Scale is designed by Rudolf Moos to evaluate the social environments of different types of work.

		Social status score ⁴⁷			Training opportunities offered from work	
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⁴⁷ Socio-economic index proposed by Ganzeboom, De Graaf & Treiman in 1992 is used.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data description and Sample selection

The Ministry of employment and labor, and the Korea Employment Information Service (KEIS) carry out ‘High School Graduates Employment Survey’ (HSGES) every two years among vocational high school graduates who have not enrolled in university, excluding students who have entered the military service. The purpose of this survey is to collect data for an analysis of youth employment and its trend, and then to utilize them for establishing policies for occupational guidance, job placement, and skills mismatch for high school graduates.⁴⁸

The survey was conducted with 5149 vocational school students who graduated in February 2013 representing a cross-section of the population. Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 show demographic characteristics of HSGES respondents. The data were collected by Tablet Aided Personal Interview (TAPI) during May –August 2013.⁴⁹

Table 3.1 Demographic profile of HSGES respondents

School	Major	Male		Female		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
SVH	Industry	1583	53.6	277	12.6	1860	36.1
	commerce	538	18.2	1299	59.2	1837	35.7
	others	270	9.1	257	11.7	527	10.2
MH	Industry	386	13.1	57	2.6	443	8.6
	others	47	1.6	5	0.2	52	1
Comprehensive high school	-	131	4.4	299	13.6	430	8.4
Total		2955	100	2194	100	5149	100

⁴⁸ Kiseong Nam et al., A basic analysis report from 2013 High School Graduates Employment Survey (HSGES) (Seoul: Korea Employment Information Service(KEIS), 2013), 1.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 3.

Table 3.2 Number and percentage of the employed among the total HSGES respondents by school

School	No. of respondents (A)	No. of employed (B)	(B/A), %
SVH	4224	3230	76.5
MH	495	436	88.1
Comprehensive high school	430	331	77
Total	5149	3997	77.6

Table 3.3 Number and percentage of respondents employed in either wage or non-wage employment by school and by major

	Major	No. of respondents employed	Employment type	
			Wage employment	Non-wage employment
Total		3997 (100%)	3975 (99.5%)	22 (0.6%)
SVH	Industry	1377 (100%)	1371 (99.6%)	6 (0.4%)
	commerce	1475 (100%)	1468 (99.5%)	7 (0.5%)
	others	378 (100%)	370 (97.9%)	8 (2.1%)
MH	Industry	392 (100%)	392 (100%)	-
	others	44 (100%)	44 (100%)	-
Comprehensive high school	-	331 (100%)	330(99.7%)	1 (0.3%)

Table 3.3 Basic demographic information of the respondents selected in this study

School	No. of graduates (%)		
	Male	Female	Total
SVH	1162 (84.8%)	209 (15.2%)	1371 (100%)
MH	338 (86.2%)	54 (13.8%)	392 (100%)
Total	1500 (85.1%)	263 (14.9%)	1763 (100%)
Average age	18.8 years		

The sample for this study as shown in Tables 3.3 and 3.4 is chosen according to the respondents' major and employment type. First, as most MH programs have a strong focus on the industrial field, SVH graduates who only majored in industry are selected to see the extent to how much difference is observed in decency of employment between the two groups. Second, decent work includes non-wage employment; however, respondents employed in such employment type are 0.34 percent (6 people out of 1763) in this sample and data analysis for those presents

practical difficulties. In those regards, the sample for an analysis consists of 1763 individuals with an industry major and currently in wage employment.

Table 3.4 illustrates the basic demographic information of the selected sample. 85.1 percent of the respondents are male and 14.9 percent are female, which reflects a male dominance in vocational education, especially, in programs with an industry focus. And, their average age is 18.8 years. The data gathered were analyzed by using frequency and percentage statistical tools such as STATA/IC 13.1 and Microsoft Excel 2010.

3.2. Instrument

Measuring decent work aims to describe multifaceted dimensions of decent work for workers. Furthermore, a measure of decent work focuses on individual countries and recognizing progress or shortcomings in a country-specific circumstance. On this account, this paper describes detailed information on each dimension of decent work.

There has been another way of measuring decent work or job quality in many other studies using a composite index. However, there are several drawbacks of indexing for estimating progress towards decent work. Aggregating different variable into a single index includes assigning a weight to different aspects of decent work, which inevitably involves in the use of restrictive assumptions.⁵⁰ Although the development of an index can be used to rank countries and to make a comparison across countries, it does not provide either much value for policy analysis or appropriate context of a country.

⁵⁰ ILO, “Measurement of decent work” (discussion paper presented for the Tripartite Meeting of Experts on the Measurement of Decent Work, Geneva, Switzerland, September 8-10, 2008): 3.

Therefore this study rather focuses on describing employment situations that graduates from SVH or MH face on a basis of eight indicators proposed by ILO and the existing literature, and then uncovers what percentage of the employees holds decent work, what percentage of employment satisfies the applied indicators, which aspects of work hinder the achievement of decent work , and which aspects of work needs most improvement.

3.3 Description of generated indicators to be applied

Table 3.5 shows that indicators are adopted to measure decency of the SVH and MH graduates' employment. The seven groups of indicators proposed by Anker et al. and the job satisfaction indicator is added in order to observe employees' general and subjective well-being about their work. And, substantive indicators are generated based on the existing literature.

Table 3.4 Generated indicators under each decent work dimension to be applied

	Decent work dimensions proposed by ILO	Covered in this study	Substantive indicators to be applied in this study
1	Employment Opportunities	V	1.Labor force participation rate 2.Employment-population ratio 3.Unemployment rate 4.Inactivity rate
2	Unacceptable work	-	-
3	Adequate earnings and productive work	V	Does an employee earn more than 1/2 of the average monthly pay rate of the total wage employed?
4	Decent hours	V	Does an employee work between 36 and 48 hours per week?
5	Stability and security of work	V	1. Does an employee have one year or more as a minimum length of employment and is an employee entitled to statutory benefits? 2. Is an employee a regular worker? 3. Can an employee continue his or her current job as long as a company exists and unless he or she is responsible for termination of employment?
6	Combining work and family life	-	-
7	Fair treatment in employment	V	Differentials between male and female employees are discussed for each decent work indicator in this study.
8	Safe work environment	-	-
9	Social protection	V	Is an employee covered by the basic four insurances?: National pension, Employment insurance, National health insurance, and Workers' compensation insurance
10	Social dialogue and workplace relations	V	1. Does a company have a labor union? 2. (Among those working for a company that has a labor union), do they belong to a workers' union?
11	Economic and social context of decent work	-	-
12		Additional indicator	Job satisfaction

The selected indicators reflect ‘Employment opportunities’, ‘Adequate earnings’, ‘Decent hours’, ‘Job security’, ‘Fair treatment’, ‘Social protection’, and ‘Social dialogue’ in the Korean labor market. Discussions for ‘Unacceptable work’, ‘Combining work and family life’, ‘Safe work environment’, ‘Economic and social context of decent work’ are not included in this study due to a data availability and relatively being little applicable to the respondents in the survey. In particular, ‘Unacceptable work’ refers to child labor yet children aged less than 15 years are not allowed to work by law⁵¹ and not much indication of violation against the law is reported. Thus, as our respondents’ average age is 18.8 years, assumingly most of them are expected to be single, not much discussion will be present for ‘Combining work and family life’.

In general, many studies investigating decency of one’s employment do not tend to use macroeconomic indicators such as ‘Employment opportunities’. However, as the main objective of vocational high school program is to prepare students to enter a labor market after graduation, it is important to know that how many of vocational high school graduates compared to other groups in the working population actually have access to employment, which will be discussed in ‘Employment opportunities’.

The eight groups of decent work dimensions and their generated substantive indicators in the Korean context are present as below.

1. Employment opportunities:

In order to measure employment opportunities for vocational high school

⁵¹ Labor standards Act_ Article 64 (Minimum Age and Employment Permit Certificate)(1) A minor under the age of 15 (including any minor under the age of 18 who attends a middle school under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) shall not be employed at any work.

students, the four labor market indicators and their breakdown by sex and age groups will be used. The suggested indicators are labor force participation rate and employment-to-population rate as a measurement of successful access to employment, and unemployment rate and inactivity rate as a measurement of denied access to employment.

The inactivity rate will be considered as a proxy for denied access to employment since it is assumed that the youth inactivity rate is driven by those not captured in the unemployment rate: discouraged workers, people neither in employment, training nor in education, or students who have attended university due to lack of employment opportunities after high school.⁵²

2. Adequate earnings and productive work

Hourly earnings above one half of median are considered as a decent pay according to ILO. In this paper, however, one half of average monthly wage of the total waged employees will be used as a decent pay threshold, which has the advantage of simplicity and is also commonly used. In addition, difference between applying an average monthly wage and one half of median of hourly earnings as a threshold assumes minor.

3. Decent hours

Decent hours are defined as hours worked between 36 to 48 hours per week. In the Economically Active Population survey, underemployment in terms of working hours comprises persons working less than 36 hours per week but wanting to work

⁵² Jaeryang Nam and Taehi Gwon, *Empirical studies on high school graduates' employment trends and outcomes* (Seoul: Korea Employment Information Service (KEIS), 2012), 7.

more hours⁵³ and ILO specifies hours worked exceeding 48 hours as excessive hours^{54,55}. Although the Korean labor law stipulates the maximum working hours of up to 40 hours per week⁵⁶, the observation rate is very low in reality. The actual weekly working hours will be calculated after combining between normal weekly working hours and the average overtime hours per week.

4. Stability and security of work

Those who are regular workers with a permanent contract and who feel secure about their employment are considered to have a decent level of job stability. In this regard, a “decent” level of job security is decided on the following three survey questions:

1. Does an employee have one year or more as a minimum length of employment and is an employee entitled to statutory benefits? (Objective measurement)
2. Is an employee a regular worker? (Objective measurement)
3. Can an employee continue his or her current job as long as a company exists and unless he or she is responsible for termination of employment? (A respondent's perception of his or her job stability)

According to Choi⁽²⁾, although employees are regular workers with a permanent

⁵³ Bureau of Social Statistics, Employment Statistics Division, “Economically Active Population Survey,” accessed July 23, 2014, http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1DA7012&vw_cd=&list_id=&scrId=&seqNo=&lang_mode=ko&obj_var_id=&itm_id=&conn_path=K1&path=.

⁵⁴ Sangheon Lee, Deirdre McCann and Jon C. Messenger, *Working time around the world: trends in working hours, laws and policies in a global comparative perspective* (Switzerland: ILO, 2007), 45.

⁵⁵ ILO, “Measurement of decent work” (discussion paper presented for the Tripartite Meeting of Experts on the Measurement of Decent Work, Geneva, Switzerland, September 8-10, 2008): 46.

⁵⁶ Labor Standards Act_Article 50 (Work Hours) (1) Work hours shall not exceed 40 hours a week, excluding hours of recess. (2) Work hours shall not exceed eight hours a day, excluding hours of recess.

contract, they experience a different degree of job security.⁵⁷ Therefore, respondents' perception about their job stability is included in the analysis. Even though this is a subjective judgment, it can provide useful information on how employees understand their own situation regarding employment stability.

5. Fair treatment in employment

The legislation prohibits discrimination against workers on the basis of gender, nationality, religion or social status.⁵⁸ Despite other existing types of discrimination, this part pays attention to gender discrimination. The seven chosen decent work indicators will be measured separately for men and women in addition to total so as to see if there is any gender disparity detected in each decent work indicator.

6. Social protection

Measuring decency of social protection will be based on a survey question: if an employee is covered by the main four branches of social insurance:⁵⁹

1. National pension (NP) against serious disability, death, old age
2. Health insurance (HI) against diseases and injuries
3. Employment insurance (EI) against unemployment
4. Workers' compensation insurance (WCI) against work-related accidents

⁵⁷ Ok-Geum Choi, "An exploratory study on the Decent Job: the Definition of the Decent Job and Its Characteristics," *The Korean Social Security Association* 22, no. 2 (2006):234-235.

⁵⁸ Labor Standards Act _Article 6 (Equal Treatment) An employer shall neither discriminate against workers on the basis of gender, nor take discriminatory treatment in relation to terms and conditions of employment on the ground of nationality, religion, or social status.

⁵⁹ Social Insurance Information System, "Social Insurance Scheme," accessed January 23, 2015, <http://www.4insure.or.kr/ins4/ptl/eng/guid/SoclInsuLayout.do>.

NP, HI, and EI are financed by employer' and employees' contribution, and WCI is solely financed by employer.⁶⁰ In spite of the fact that the Korean social insurance is based on the principles of mandatory insurance, workers in some atypical forms of employment such as marginal part-timers, freelancers, self-employed...etc. are not covered by the social insurance system.

7. Social dialogue and workplace relations

Trade union and labor relations adjustment act Article_1 and 5 prescribes workers' rights of association and their right to collective bargaining and action pursuant to the Constitution.⁶¹

Therefore, decency of social dialogue and workplace relations will be measured on a basis of existence of a labor union and union density rate.

The following indicators are adopted:

1. Does a company have a labor union?
2. Does an employee belong to a labor union?

⁶⁰ Korea certified public labor attorneys association, "The four basic insurances," accessed January 23, 2015, http://www.kcplaa.or.kr/http://kin.naver.com/qna/detail.nhn?d1id=6&dirId=6080402&docId=211412856&qb=NOuMgCDrs7Tt15gg64iE6rCAIOu2gOuLtO2VmOuCmA==&enc=utf8§ion=kin&rank=1&search_sort=0&spq=0&pid=SK5pudpySEZssbX8ZYossssstl-106502&sid=VMJpCQpyVmEAAGu8ELk.

⁶¹ Trade union and labor relations adjustment act _Article 1 (Purpose) The purpose of this Act is to maintain and improve the working conditions and the economic and social status of workers by securing the their rights of association, right to collective bargaining and collective action pursuant to the Constitution, and to contribute to the maintenance of industrial peace and to the development of the national economy by preventing and resolving labor disputes through the fair adjustment of labor relations.

8. Job satisfaction

The job satisfaction is described based on 13 different aspects: income, job security, safe and healthy working environment, working hours, career development prospect, relations with superiors and colleagues, social protection, promotion system, occupational status, job autonomy and control, training and learning opportunities, general satisfaction level about a job assignment, overall job satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5 (1: Very unsatisfactory, 2: Somewhat unsatisfactory, 3: Somewhat satisfactory, 4: Satisfactory, and 5 : Very satisfactory). Results for the questions in aspects of ‘income’, ‘job security’, ‘working hours’, and ‘social protection’ demonstrate their job-related subjective well-being as a complement to objective measures discussed in the previous parts.

4. Empirical findings

The generated substantive indicators from the eight groups of decent work dimensions in Chapter three are applied to employment of SVH and MH graduates in order to measure decency of their work.

4.1. Employment opportunities

Over the last ten years, the labor force participation and employment-to population rates of total labor force have changed little and the unemployment rate has also been subject to minor fluctuations in Table 4.1.

In contrast, although the number of youth working population has been in a downward for the past ten years, there has been also a long-term decline in the youth labor force participation and employment-to population rates but the unemployment rate has stayed at around 8 percent, which can be explained by the increasing number of inactive youth population. Youth inactive population accounts for 34.7 percent of the total number of inactive population for the last decade.

Table 4.1 continues to display that the labor force participation and employment-to-population rates among female youth have been higher than that among male youth but the unemployment rate among female youth has been lower than that among male youth. In addition, inactive population for female youth was slightly bigger than that for male youth but since 2010, male youth inactive population has exceeded female youth's. According to the key indicators of the labor market, the female youth seems to have more access to employment than the male youth.

Table 4.1 Labor force indicators for total labor force and youth (2004-2013)⁶²

Table 4.1	Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total labor force (15 years old or more)	Labor force Participation rate (%)	62.1	62	61.9	61.8	61.5	60.8	61	61.1	61.3	61.5
	Unemployment rate (%)	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.2	3.2	3.6	3.7	3.4	3.2	3.1
	Employment-to- population rate (%)	59.8	59.7	59.7	59.8	59.5	58.6	58.7	59.1	59.4	59.5
Youth ⁶³ (15-29 years old)	Labor force Participation rate (%)	49.2	48.8	47.1	46	44.8	44	43.8	43.8	43.7	43.2
	Unemployment rate (%)	8.3	8	7.9	7.2	7.2	8.1	8	7.6	7.5	8
	Employment-to- population rate (%)	45.1	44.9	43.4	42.6	41.6	40.5	40.3	40.5	40.4	39.7
Youth by gender	Labor force Participation rate (%)	male	49.9	48.6	46.6	45.7	43.9	43.3	42.6	42.6	42
		female	48.5	48.9	47.5	46.3	45.6	44.7	45	44.9	44.4
	Unemployment rate (%)	male	9.7	9.2	9.1	9.1	8.6	9.8	9.3	9	8.6
		female	6.9	6.8	6.7	5.4	5.8	6.4	6.7	6.4	7
	Employment-to- population rate (%)	male	45.1	44.1	42.4	41.5	40.1	39	38.7	38.8	38.1
		female	45.2	45.6	44.3	43.7	43	41.8	42	42.1	41.3
Total labor force by gender (1000s)	Inactive	male	4584	4734	4885	4960	5117	5278	5356	5393	5437
		female	9716	9823	9898	9994	10134	10420	10485	10561	10645
	Total		14300	14557	14784	14954	15251	15698	15841	15953	16081
Youth by gender (1000s)	Inactive	male	2445	2459	2546	2611	2695	2722	2738	2707	2716
		female	2706	2625	2663	2714	2729	2754	2713	2683	2645
	Total		5151	5084	5209	5325	5423	5477	5452	5390	5361

⁶² Statistics Korea. “Economically Active Population Survey.” accessed July 23, 2013.http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1DA7012&vw_cd=&list_id=&scrId=&seqNo=&lang_mode=ko&obj_var_id=&itm_id=&conn_path=K1&path=⁶³ Here, youth refers to a person aged between 15 and 29 years in Korea while ILO and many other countries define youth as the age group of 15 to 24 years old.

Specifically, in respect to access to employment for vocational high school graduates, other sources of data from the Ministry of Education and KRIVET will be provided as a proxy. In the selected sample in the survey, vocational high school graduates who have gone to university or intend to go are excluded, hence, the data do not show how many of graduates out of the total have entered labor market.

Table 4.2, however, illustrates the number of the graduates out of the total including people in education. And, it shows that a higher percentage of MH graduate employees are in employed than that of SVH graduate employed (SVH: 40.9 percent, MH: 74.1 percent), and 41.4 percent and 13.9 percent of graduates from SVH and MH are in education respectively. Furthermore, 17.7 percent of SVH graduates and 12 percent of MH graduates are either unemployed or NEET. A considerable percentage of SVH graduates have gone for a higher education compared to MH graduates (SVH: 41.4 percent, MH: 13.9 percent). All the figures in Table 4.2 indicate more successful access to employment for MH graduates than for SVH graduates.

Table 4.2 Economic status of SVH and MH graduate students in 2013⁶⁴

	No. of Graduates eligible for work ⁶⁵	No. of Persons in employment	No. of Persons in higher education than high school	No. of Persons in unemployment or NEET ⁶⁶
SVH	105132	43001 (40.9%)	43796 (41.4%)	18335 (17.7%)
MH	5314	3940 (74.1%)	752 (13.9%)	622 (12%)

The data in Table 4.3 generated from ‘High School Graduates Employment Survey’ (HSGES) reveals that there has been an increase in the employment rate and

⁶⁴ Byeongu Kang et al., *2013 handbook of Vocational high schools (Specialized Vocational school, Comprehensive school, Meister School)* (Seoul: Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education & Training (KRIVET), 2013), 9 & 163.

⁶⁵ The number of graduates eligible for work= the number of high school graduate students-the number of graduate students in a military duty

⁶⁶ NEET refers to a person neither in education nor in employment and training.

decrease in the unemployment rate for 2011-2013 but the rate of inactive population⁶⁷ has risen, which is in line with the increasing number of inactive population in Table 4.1.

Table 4.3 Economic status of vocational high school graduates in HSGES⁶⁸

		Economically active population (%)		Inactive population (%)
		Employed	Unemployed	
2011		75.9	9.5	14.6
2013		77.4	6.2	16.5
Sex	Male	74.5	6.1	19.4
	Female	81	6.3	12.7
SVH	Major	Industry	6	19.8
		Commerce	6.2	13.6
		Others	8.7	17.8
MH	Industry and others		2.5	8.5

According to a school type, MH graduates in Table 4.3 show better access to employment than SVH graduates. In terms of employment opportunities by major in Table 4.4, employment situation for SVH graduates with an industry major is the most pessimistic while graduates with a commerce major (which female students are traditionally overrepresented in) show the most successful access to employment among other SVH graduates. Female vocational high students in general show better employment opportunities than male counterparts in terms of the employment rate and inactive rate in Table 4.3.

From a gender-specific perspective, Table 4.3 also indicates that the female

⁶⁷ NEET

⁶⁸ Kiseong Nam et al., *A basic analysis report from 2013 High School Graduates Employment Survey (HSGES)* (Seoul: Korea Employment Information Service (KEIS), 2013), 117.

employment rate is higher by 6.5 percent, and the female inactivity rate is lower by 6.7 percent than their male counterparts', which shows better access to employment for women than for men. The female unemployment rate (6.3 percent) is slightly higher than the male's (6.1 percent), which contradicts the youth unemployment trend between men and women (2013: 9.1 percent, 7 percent respectively).

Table 4.4 Economic status of vocational high school graduates with an industry major in HSGES 2013

Graduates with an industry major (%)		Employed	Unemployed	Inactive
SVH	Total	74	5.9	20.1
	Male	73.7	5.6	20.8
	Female	76.2	7.6	16.2
MH	Total	88.5	2.5	9
	Male	87.6	2.3	10.1
	Female	94.7	3.5	1.8

To sum up, the employment situation of youth shows lower participation rate, higher unemployment rate, lower employment rate, and higher inactive rate compared to those of the total labor force, which shows serious underutilization of the youth working age population. In recent years, the employment situation for female youth is slightly better than for male youth according to the labor market indicators.

Regarding employment opportunities for vocational high school graduates, the employment rate for SVH graduates (40.9 percent) reports a similar trend as the total youth employment rate (39.7 percent) but that for MH graduates is much higher (74.1 percent), which shows more successful access to employment for MH graduates than for SVH graduates.

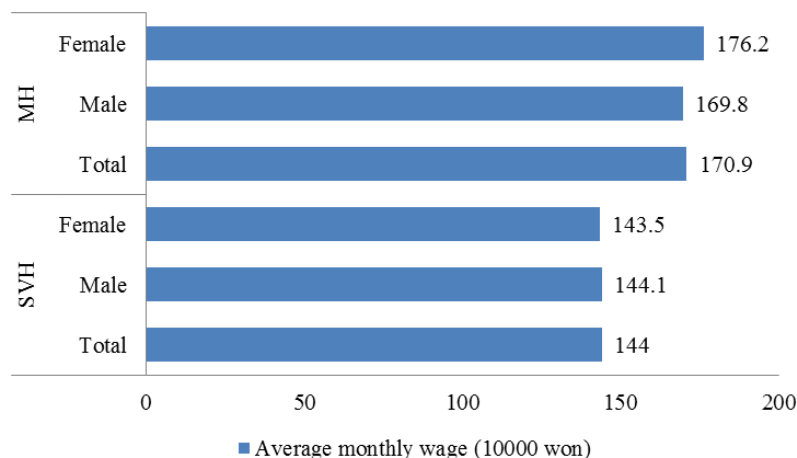
From a gender perspective, the employment situation for female graduates looks better than that for male graduates in terms of the employment rate and inactive

rate, which can be partially understood by the fact that male graduates are less likely to be in employment before completion of military service. Therefore, they tend to work part-time or become inactive in a period after high school graduation and before military service instead of seeking a decent job that demands higher skill requirements and commitment than a part-time job. However, it needs further study about how the current gender discrepancy in employment opportunities for vocational high school graduates will change after male graduates have finished their military duty.

4.2. Adequate earnings

According to the Korean labor statistics, the average monthly wage of the total employees is 3,299,000 won in 2013.⁶⁹ In Figure 4.1, SVH graduate employees earn 84.26 percent of the monthly wage that MH graduate employees earn on average (SVH: 1,440,000 won, MH: 1,709,000 won). Figure 4.1 also shows not much gender pay gap among SVH graduate employees but MH female workers earn 3.8 percent higher than their male counterparts on average.

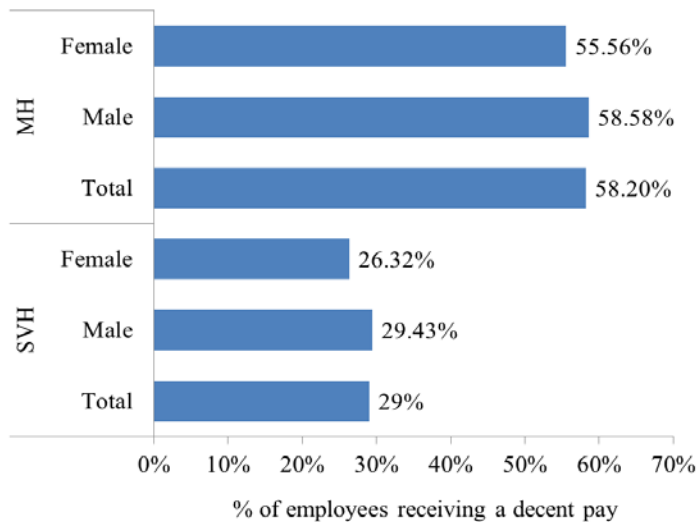
Figure 4.1 Average monthly wages by school and by gender



⁶⁹ Ministry of Employment and Labor, “ Report on the Labor Force Survey at Establishments,” accessed May 2, 2014, http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=1485.

As a decent pay threshold is defined as a 50 percent of the average monthly wage of the total employees, 1.65 million won, the percentages of employees who earn a decent pay from SVH and MH are 29 percent and 58.2 percent respectively, and for both groups, the larger percentage of male employees receive a decent pay than that of female in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Percentage of employees receiving a decent monthly pay by gender and by school



Figures 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 demonstrate the distribution of monthly pay by school and gender. In Figure 4.3, a larger percentage of employees from SVH are distributed at the lower end of the pay distribution than that of employees from MH. On the other hand, a larger percentage of employees from MH are distributed at the higher end of the pay distribution than that of employees from SVH.

According to gender, the monthly pay distributions in SVH and MH do not show a big difference in Figures 4.4 and 4.5.

Figure 4.3 Distribution of monthly pay by school

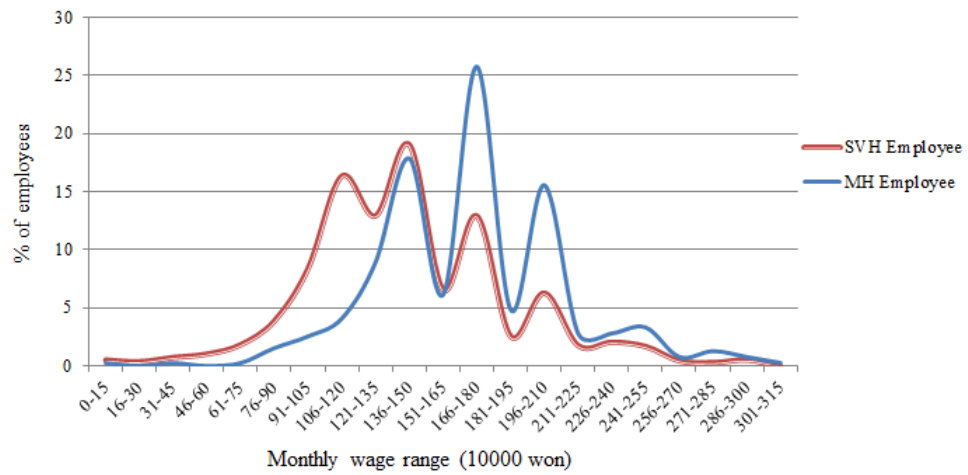


Figure 4.4 Distribution of monthly pay of SVH by gender

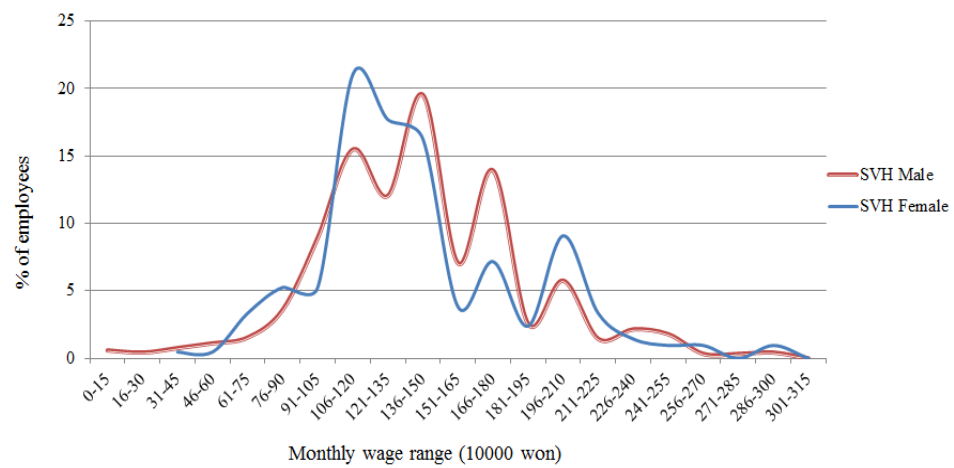
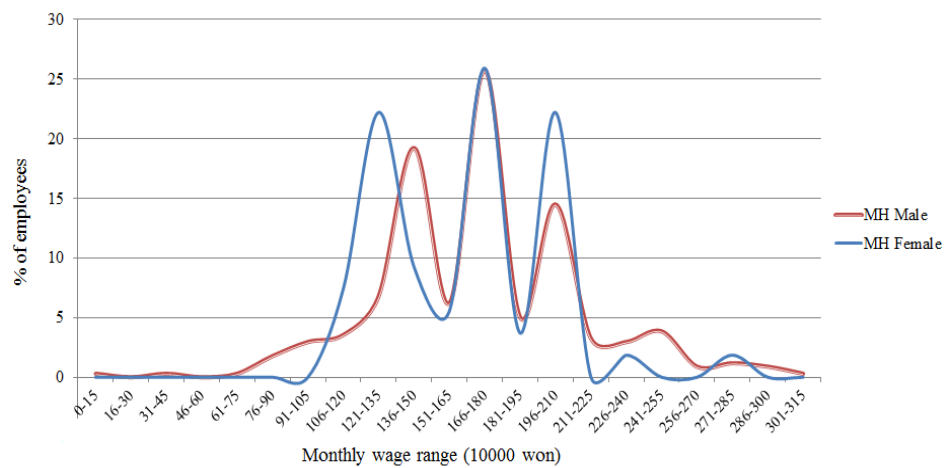


Figure 4.5 Distribution of monthly pay of MH by gender



4.3. Decent hours

Table 4.5 indicates average working hours by school and gender, and not much difference among the groups observed. Thus, the average working hours of MH male and female groups are around the decent hour standard between 36 and 48 hours but SVH groups work longer hours than the decent hour standard.

Table 4.5 Average working hours by school and by gender

		Average hours worked per week
SVH	Total	50.1
	Male	50.2
	Female	49.7
MH	Total	48.4
	Male	48.5
	Female	47.6

Table 4.6 Percentage of employees by weekly working hours

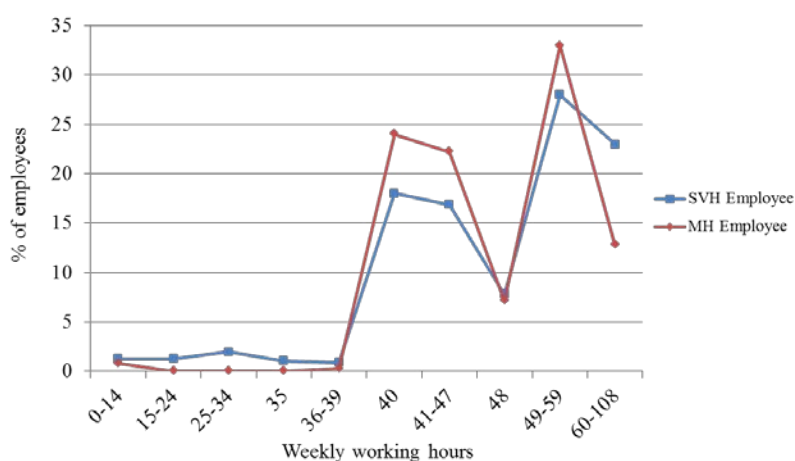
	Weekly hours worked	Less than 36 hours	Between 36 and 48 hours	Exceeding 48 hours
SVH	Total	5.47%	43.54%	50.98%
	Male	5.77%	41.74%	52.5%
	Female	3.83%	53.59%	42.58%
MH	Total	0.77%	53.57%	45.66%
	Male	0.59%	50.59%	48.82%
	Female	0%	73.6%	26.4%

In Table 4.6, the percentages of employees that work decent hours between 36 and 48 hours from SVH and MH are 43.54 percent and 52.98 percent respectively. Still, a striking percentage of employees from both groups tend to work long hours more than 48 hours (SVH: 50.98 percent, MH: 45.66 percent).

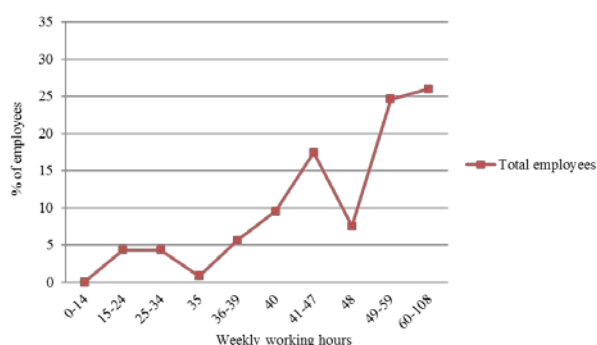
Table 4.6 continues to display a substantial gender difference in both SVH and MH employees. A larger percentage of female employees tend to work decent hours than that of their male counterparts by 11.85 percent among SVH graduates and by 23.01 percent among MH graduates.

Figures 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8 reveal the distribution of total time spent at work per week and the horizontal axis in the graphs is scaled at different hour intervals specifying the thresholds of decent hours between 36 and 48 hours, and the Korean statutory working hour, 40 hours as a tick mark.⁷⁰ The percentages of employees that work insufficient hours, less than 36 hours, are 5.47 percent in SVH and 0.77 percent in MH (See Table 4.6) and the percentages of employees that work longer than 60 hours are 23 percent in SVH and 12.76 percent in MH (See Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6 Distribution of working hours by school



From a gender perspective, as shown in Table 4.6, more SVH female workers



70

<The distribution of working hours in Korea, 2004>

Sangheon Lee, Deirdre McCann and Jon C. Messenger, *Working time around the world: trends in working hours, laws and policies in a global comparative perspective* (Switzerland: ILO, 2007), 61.

work around the decent hours and less of them work excessive hours or insufficient hours than their male workers. Similarly, more MH female workers work around the decent hours and less of them work excessive hours but there is no significant gender difference detected in terms of insufficient working hours among MH graduate employees.

Figure 4.7 Distribution of working hours of SVH graduate employees by gender

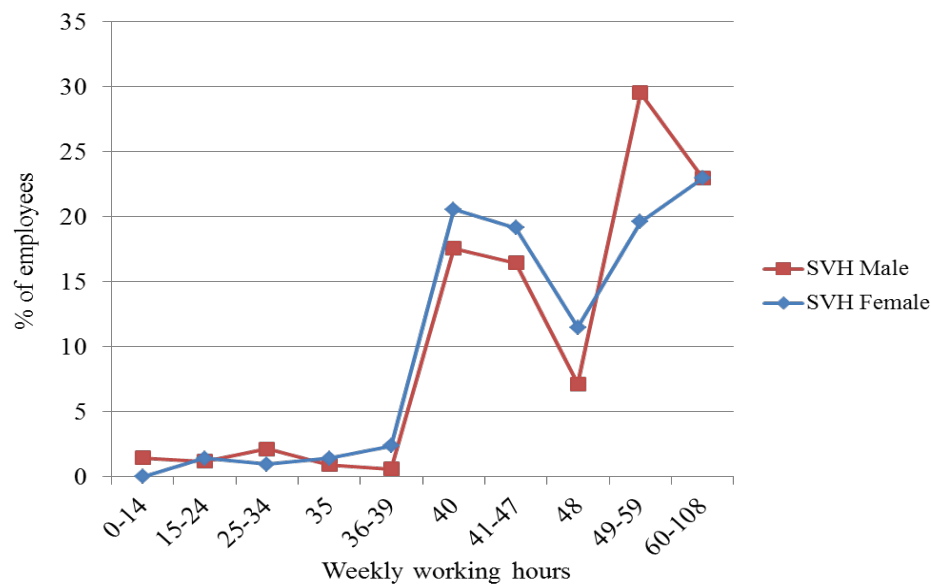
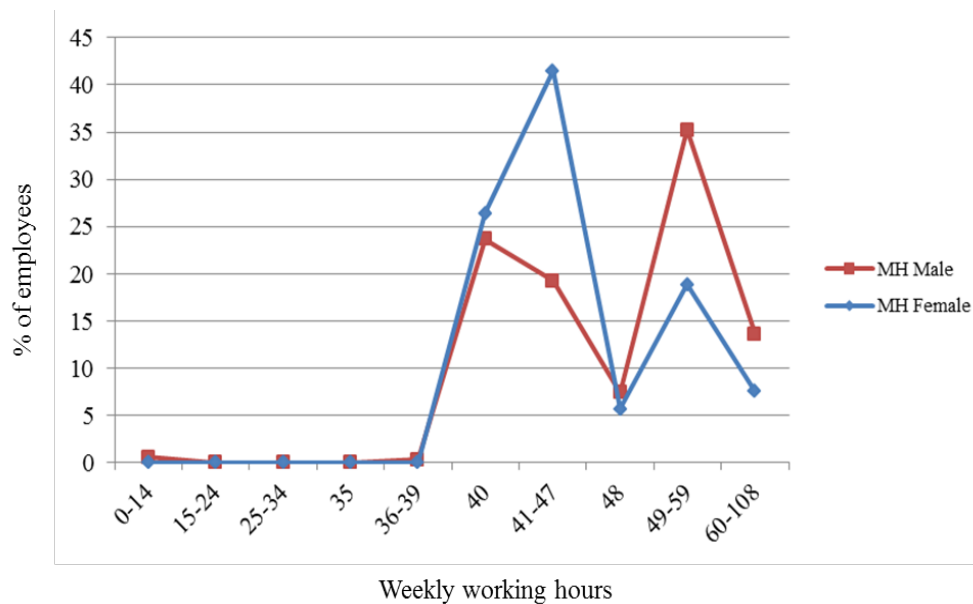


Figure 4.8 Distribution of working hours of MH graduate employees by gender



4.4. Stability and security of work

As discussed in Chapter three, measurement of stability and security of work is based on the three survey questions in Table 4.7:

-1. Do you have one year or more as a minimum length of employment and is an employee entitled to statutory benefits?

-2. Are you a regular worker?

-3. Can you continue your current job as long as a company exists and unless you are responsible for termination of employment?

And, one's job is considered to have a decent level of stability when his or her responses for all the three questions are positive.

Table 4.7 Percentage of employees by employment status

		Employment status representing an objective stability (%)		Stability perceived by respondents representing a subjective stability (%)
		1. Do you have one year or more as a minimum length of employment and is an employee entitled to statutory benefits? ⁷¹	2. Are you a regular worker? ⁷²	3. Can you continue your current job as long as a company exists and unless you are responsible for termination of employment?
SVH	Total	77.68	73.52	88.4
	Male	76.76	72.81	87.61
	Female	82.78	77.51	92.82
MH	Total	97.19	93.88	95.15
	Male	96.75	93.49	94.97
	Female	100	96.3	96.3

Figure 4.9 shows that 89.8 percent from MH graduate employees and 69.37 percent from SVH graduate employees are in employment with a decent level of job

⁷¹ 상용직 in Korean

⁷² 정규직 in Korean

security. From a gender specific point, employment of female employees in both SVH and MH tends to have better job security than that of male employees with an average of 3.06 percent among MH graduate employees and 5.72 percent among SVH graduate employees. Male employees' job security from both groups is lower than female employees', which can result from a higher rate of temporary and casual employment among male employees than that of female employees shown in Table 4.8.

Figure 4.9 Percentage of employees with a decent level of Job stability

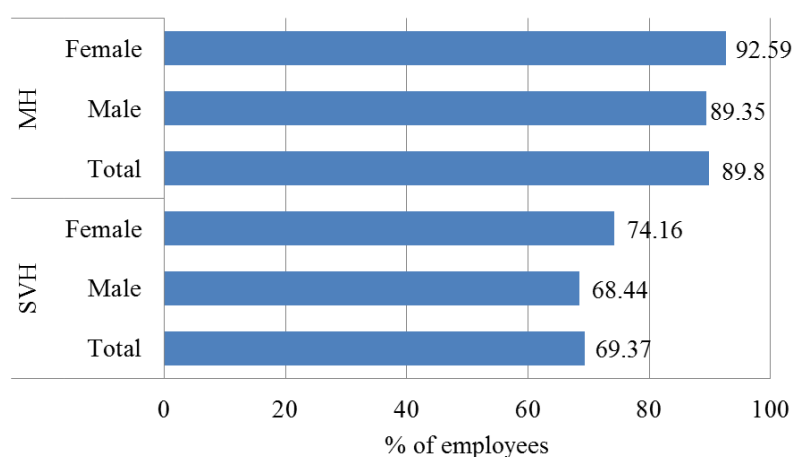


Table 4.8 Percentage of employees by status in wage employment

		Permanent ⁷³	Temporary	Casual
SVH	Total	77.68	18.45	3.87
	Male	76.76	19.1	4.13
	Female	82.78	14.83	2.39
MH	Total	97.19	2.81	-
	Male	96.75	3.25	-
	Female	100	-	-

⁷³ Definition of types of employment:

-Permanent: 1. Tenure more than one year 2. Open-ended contract, regulated by human resource policies 3. Entitled to statutory benefits

-Temporary: 1. Tenure more than one month but less than one year 2. Open-ended contracts, terminated on the completion of a project. 3. No statutory provision

-Casual: 1. Tenure less than one month 2. Casual workers are employed on a daily hire and are daily-rated.

Ministry of employment and labor, and Korea Employment Information Service, *2013 High School Graduates Employment Survey (HSGES)* 2013:28.

4.5. Social protection

The Korean system of social security covers four branches of social insurance based on employment: national pension, health insurance, employment insurance, and workers' compensation insurance. Decency of workers' social protection is determined when workers are covered by four types of insurances.

Figure 4.10 Percentage of employees covered by each insurance

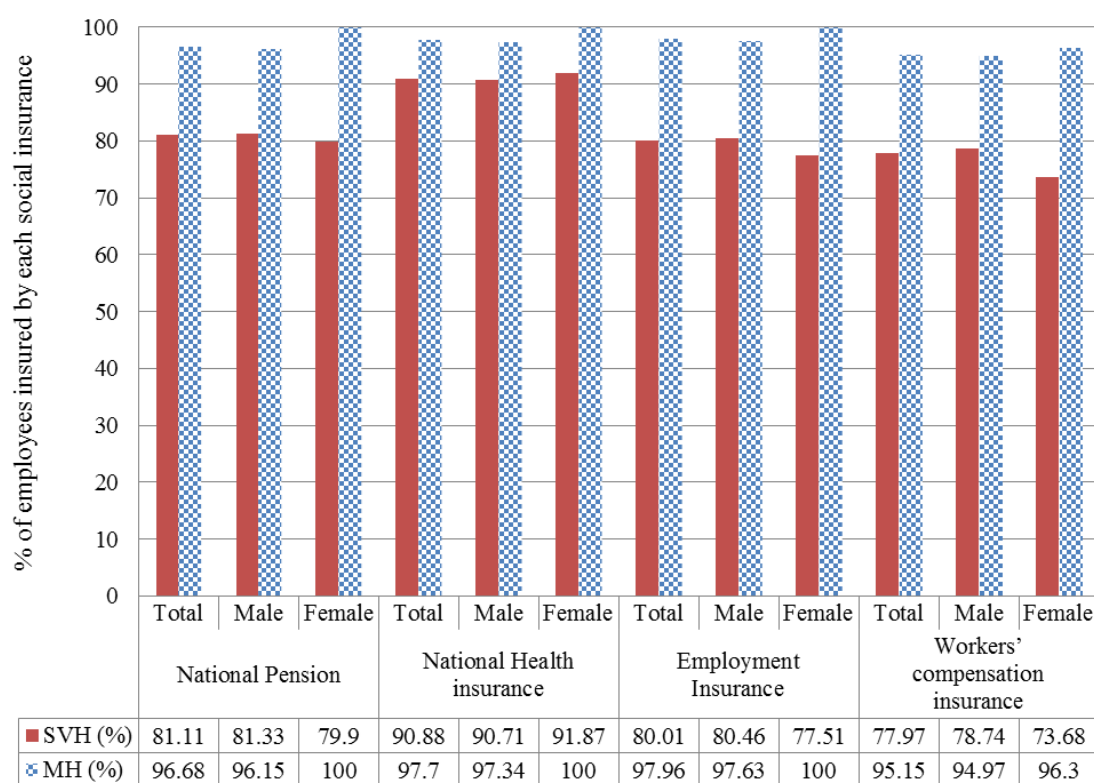


Table 4.9 Percentage of employees covered by four types of insurances by school and by gender

	Percentage of employees covered by four types of insurances (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
SVH	76.88	77.71	72.25
MH	94.39	93.79	98.15

In Table 4.9, 76.88 percent in SVH graduate employees and 94.39 percent in MH

graduate employees are covered by four types of insurances, which presents MH graduate employees have better social protection than SVH graduate employees. The bigger share of SVH male employees receives social protection from all the branches except health insurance than that of the female counterparts in Figure 4.10. On the contrary, the bigger share of MH female employees receives social protection from all the branches except employment insurance than that of male counterparts in Figure 4.10.

In many cases, social protection is closely linked to job security due to the employment-based social insurance system. In the previous discussion of stability and security of work, although more female workers (74.16 percent) have a job security than male workers (68.44 percent), more percentage of male workers (77.71percent) have social protection than that of female workers (72.25 percent) by around 5.5 percent among SVH graduates, which needs further investigation.

4.6. Social dialogue and workplace relations

Table 4.10 displays that 6.93 percent of employees from SVH and 23.21percent of employees from MH work in companies that have a labor union, and are a member of the union, which shows a considerably low level of unionization. More than 40 percent of employees from SVH and MH are employed in companies where there is no labor union, and 37.71 percent of employees from SVH and 21.68 percent of employees from MH do not even know the existence of a union of their companies in Table 4.10. When employees are aware of the existence of a union in their workplace, 47 percent of SVH graduate employees and 68 percent of MH graduate employees join the union, 31 percent of SVH graduate employees and 19 percent of MH graduate employees do not participate in the union, and 22 percent of

SVH graduate employees and 13 percent of MH graduate employees are not eligible to be a member of the union in Figure 4.11.

Table 4.10 Percentage of employees employed in a company that has a labor union and their unionization rate

Decent Work Indicator	1. Does your enterprise have a labor union? (%)			2. Are you a member of the union? (%) (Among those who have said 'yes' to the question no. 1)		
	Yes	No	I don't know	Yes	Eligible but not a member	Not eligible
SVH	14.88	47.41	37.71	6.93	4.6	3.36
MH	33.93	44.39	21.68	23.21	6.38	4.34

Figure 4.11 Unionization rate among employees employed in a company that has a labor union by school and by gender

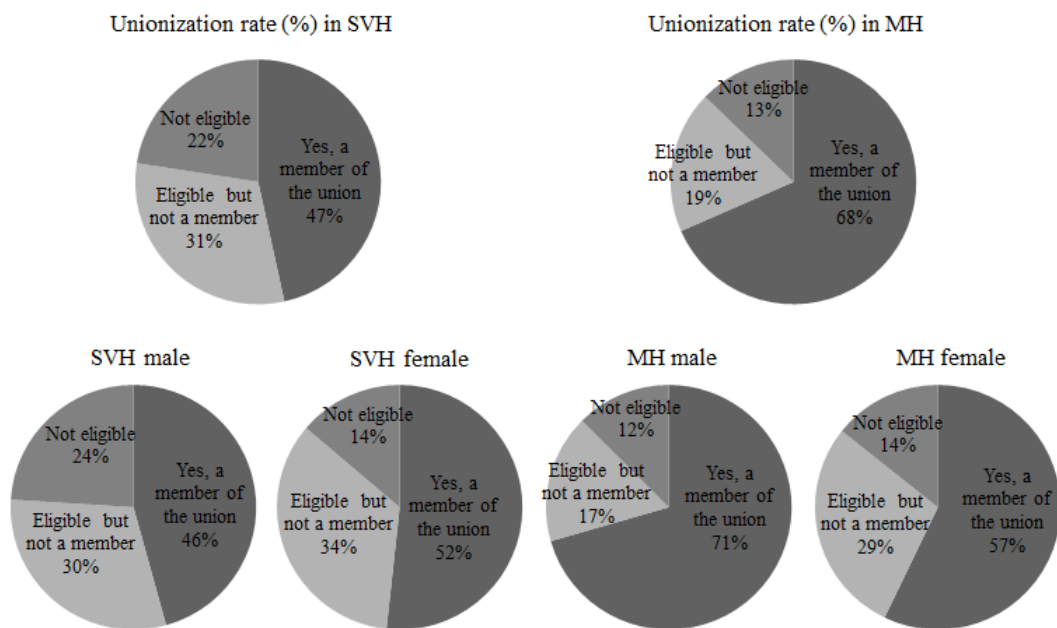


Figure 4.11 also illustrates that a bigger percentage of MH male employees join a union than that of MH female employees while a bigger percentage of SVH female employees join a union than that of SVH male employees. The highest rate of union membership is shown in MH male followed by MH female, SVH female, and SVH male in this order. When employees are eligible to be a member of a union, male employees are more likely to be a member than female employees.

4.7. Fair treatment in employment

Table 4.11 provides a percentage of male and female employees graduated from SVH and MH having a decent level of each indicator in order to see any gender differential in each indicator.

Table 4.11 Percentage of employees having a decent level of each indicator by school and by gender

Decent work indicators	SVH (%)			MH (%)		
	Female		male	Female		male
1. Employment opportunities		>			>	
2. Adequate earnings	26.23	<	29.43	55.56	<	58.58
3. Decent hours	53.59	>	41.74	73.6	>	50.59
4. Stability and security of work	74.16	>	68.44	92.59	>	89.35
5. Social protection	72.25	<	77.71	98.15	>	93.75
6. Social dialogue and workplace relations	7.18	>	6.88	22.22	<	23.37

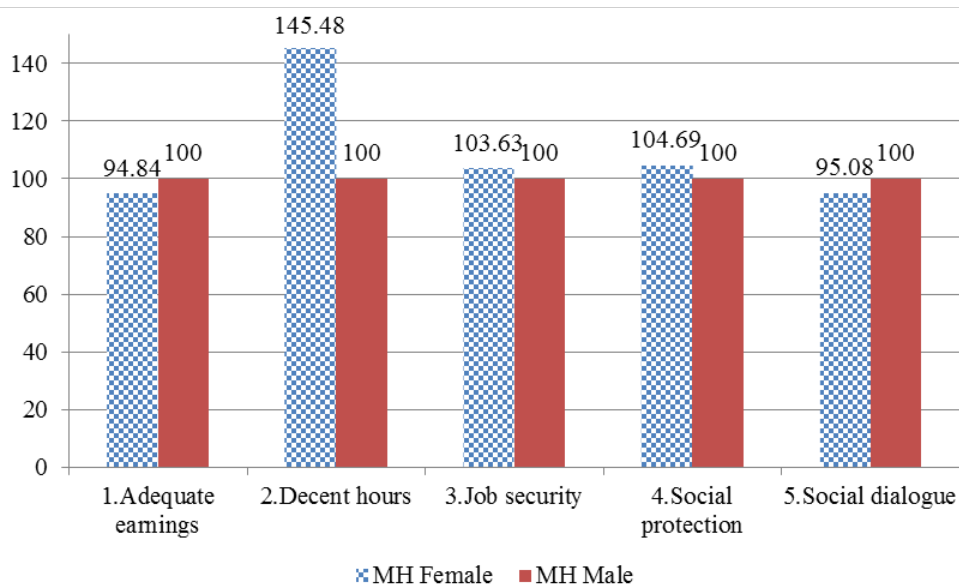
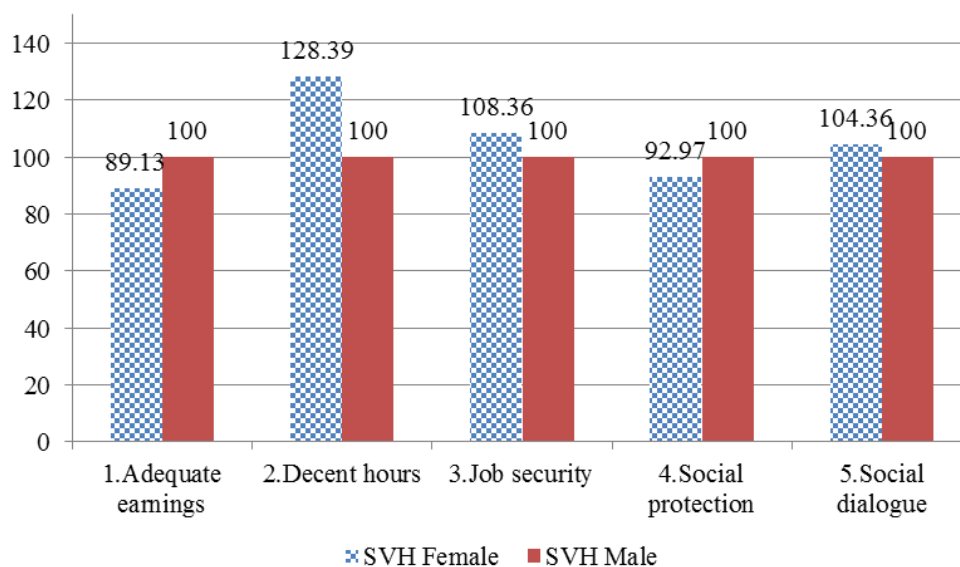
In terms of the employment rate and inactivity rate, employment access for women looks better than that for men from both groups.⁷⁴ Among the six different aspects of employment analyzed for SVH and MH graduate employees, a larger percentage of SVH and MH graduate female employees are employed with decency in four aspects and a larger percentage of male employees are employed with decency in two aspects in Table 4.11.

Bigger gender-specific differences are observed among SVH graduate employees than among MH graduate employees. To see where the biggest gender gap lies in each indicator, the percentage of male employees in Table 4.11 is rescaled to 100. Figure 4.12 reveals that there are wider gender disparities existing in all five indicators among SVH graduate employees than MH graduate employees. The biggest gender disparity is captured in ‘Decent hours’ indicator for SVH and MH

⁷⁴ For more discussion, please refer to the discussion under ‘Employment opportunities’ in Chapter four.

groups, which means more gender equal treatment is required in ‘Decent hours’ aspect in future.

Figure 4.12 Value of female employees having a decent level of each indicator (male employees’ value=100)



4.8. Comprehensive assessment

Based on the results of five out of seven decent work indicators⁷⁵ discussed so far, two sets of comprehensive analysis are presented in this section.

Analysis 1 presents the percentage of employees having a decent level in the five aspects of employment from each school so where and how much gap between employment of SVH and MH graduates exists can be identified.

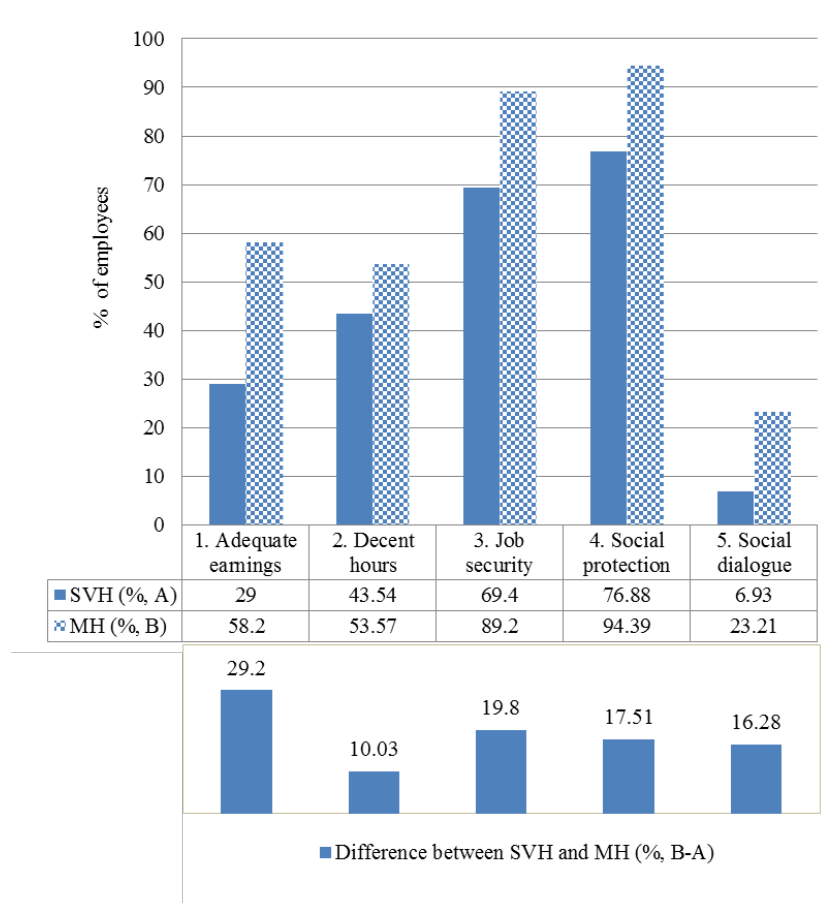
Analysis 2 provides the percentage of employment of SVH and MH graduates according to the number of decent work indicators that their employment satisfies with an assumption that the more indicators the employment satisfies, the more decent the employment is. Through this analysis, which school graduates tend to be employed in more decent work will be found out.

Analysis 1.

Figure 4.13 describes the percentage of employees that have a decent level of each indicator and differences of decency level between SVH and MH graduate employees. The highest level of decency is present in ‘Social protection’ followed by ‘Job security’ and the lowest level of decency is present in ‘Social dialogue’ in both SVH and MH. The biggest gap between the two groups is present in ‘Adequate earnings’ followed by ‘Job security’, ‘Social protection’, ‘Social dialogue’, and ‘Decent hours’ in this order.

⁷⁵ The data drawn from ‘HSGES’ are used for this comprehensive analysis, however, the results for ‘Employment opportunities’ and ‘Fair treatment’ are excluded in this analysis because of other sources of data having been used for the discussion.

Figure 4.13 Percentage of employees having a decent level in each aspect of employment by school



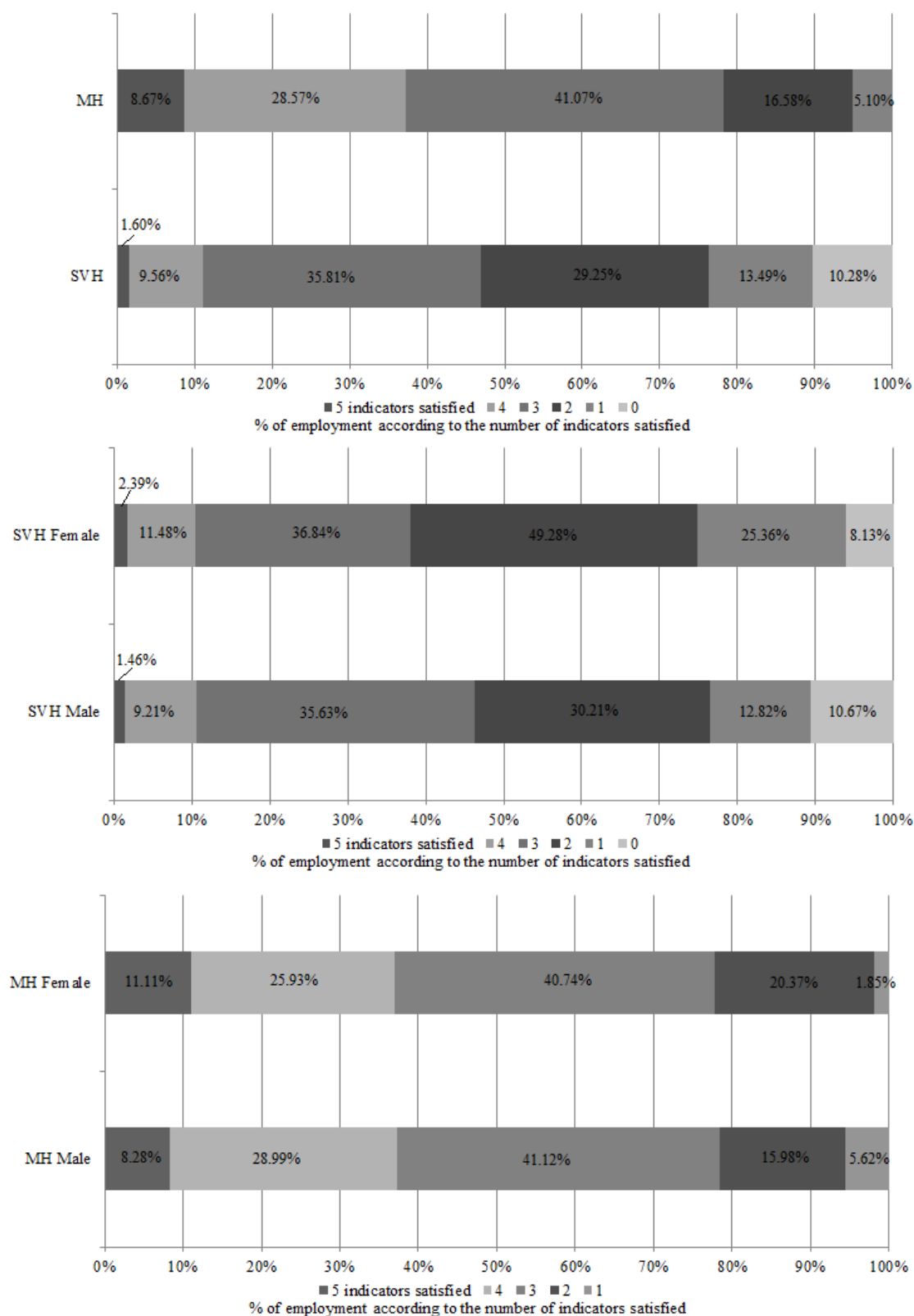
Analysis 2.

In Figure 4.14, 1.6 percent of employment for SVH graduate employees and 8.67 percent of employment for MH graduate employees satisfies all five indicators. 10.28 percent of employment that SVH graduate employees are employed in does not satisfy any indicator whereas there is no employment that does not satisfy any of indicators for MH graduate employees. Employment by MH employees shows more decency than that by SVH graduate employees.

In terms of the percentage of employment satisfying the five indicators (the most decent work) or none of the indicators (the least decent work), the results report that MH female employment presents the most decency, followed by MH male, SVH

female and SVH male in this order.

Figure 4.14 Percentage of employment according to the number of indicators satisfied by school and by gender



4.9. Job satisfaction (additional indicator)

Objective information on the seven dimensions of decent work has been studied in the previous subsections. In this section, SVH and MH graduate employees' subjective information about their work is examined. In addition, their Job satisfaction data about 'Income', 'Working hours', 'Job security', and 'Social protection' are used to complement the objective information.

The job satisfaction is defined based on a sequence of survey questions about 13 aspects of work: 'income', 'job security', 'safe and healthy working environment', 'working hours', 'career development prospect', 'relations with superiors and colleagues', 'social protection', 'promotion system', 'occupational status', 'job autonomy and control', 'training and learning opportunities', 'general satisfaction level about a job assignment', and 'overall job satisfaction'. In each aspect, responses were gathered on a scale of 1 to 5 (1: Very unsatisfactory, 2: Somewhat unsatisfactory, 3: Somewhat satisfactory, 4: Satisfactory, and 5: Very satisfactory).

Figure 4.15 Average job satisfaction by school and by gender on a scale of 1-5 (1: Very unsatisfactory, 2: Somewhat unsatisfactory, 3: Somewhat satisfactory, 4: Satisfactory, and 5: Very satisfactory)

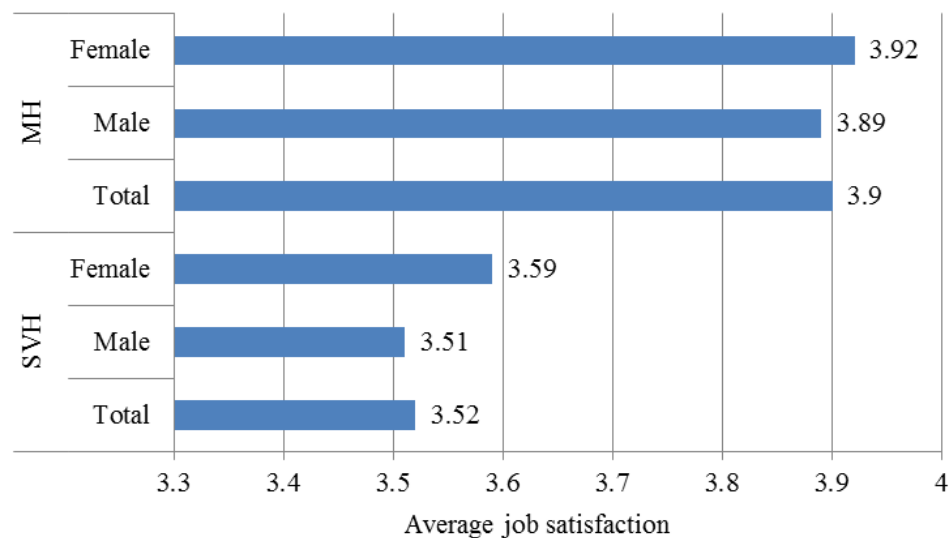


Figure 4.15 indicates that MH graduate employees report a higher average job satisfaction level than SVH graduate employees, and female employees among SVH and MH graduates show a higher average job satisfaction level than their male counterparts. The difference between the job satisfaction of women and men appears bigger among SVH graduate employees than among MH graduate employees (see Figures 4.17 and 4.18). Subjective well-being as well as objective well-being studied previously appears to be better among MH graduate employees than among SVH graduate employees.

Figure 4.16 demonstrates the job satisfaction score in each aspect of employment and the difference of the job satisfaction between SVH and MH graduate employees. It is worthwhile looking at the difference because where the biggest difference observed is the most improvement required. For the whole 13 aspects, MH graduate employees report a high degree of job satisfaction than SVH graduate employees. The biggest difference between the two groups exists in 'Learning and training opportunity' followed by 'Promotion system'. Future study is demanded to identify the reason for such a big gap between the two groups and recommend any solution to reduce the gap. The smallest difference exists in 'Relations with superiors and colleagues' followed by 'Working hours'.

Figure 4.16 Job satisfaction for SVH graduate employees and MH graduate employees on a scale of 1-5 (1: Very unsatisfactory, 2: Somewhat unsatisfactory, 3: Somewhat satisfactory, 4: Satisfactory, and 5: Very satisfactory)

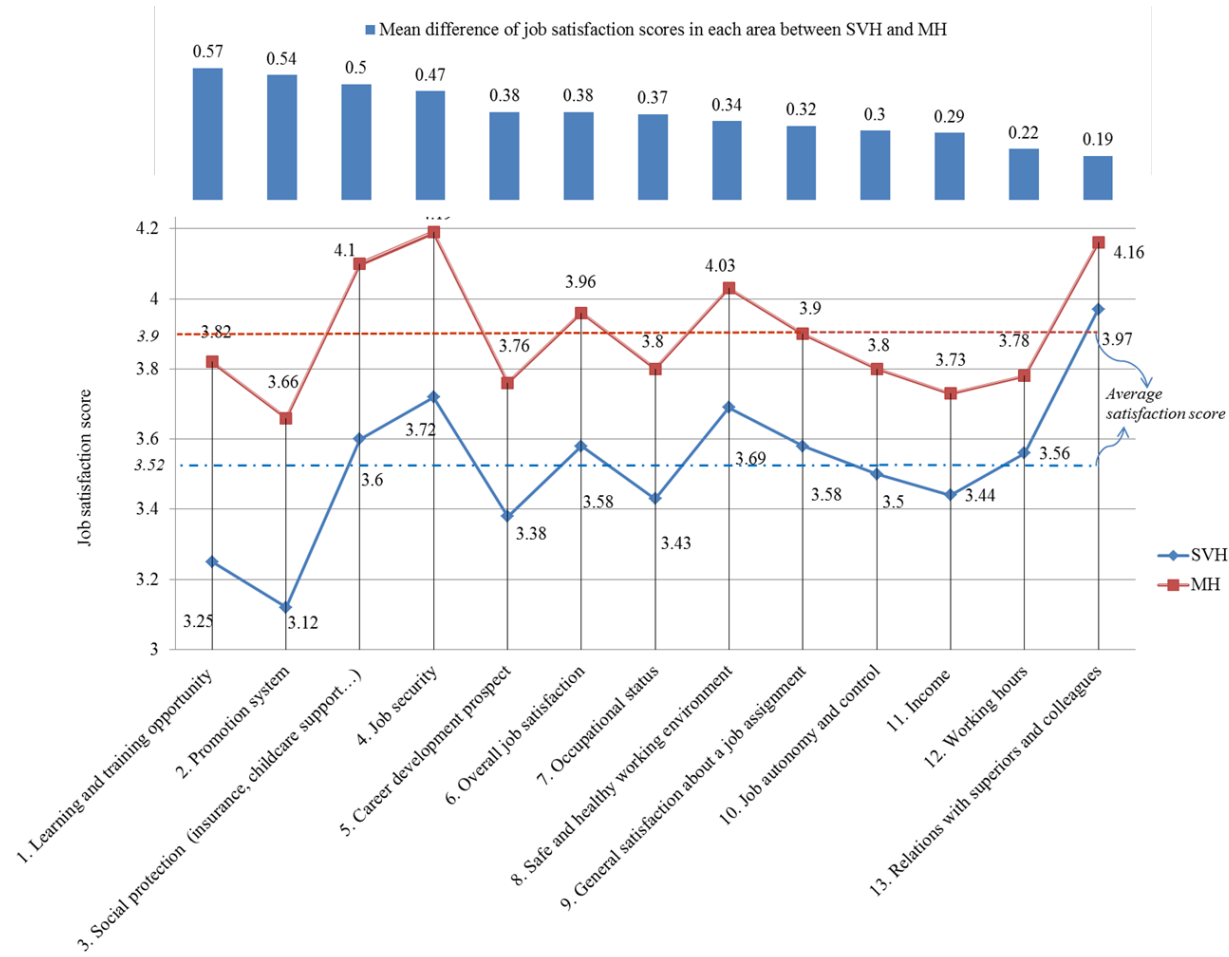


Figure 4.17 Job satisfaction for SVH graduate employees on a scale of 1-5 by gender (1: Very unsatisfactory, 2: Somewhat unsatisfactory, 3: Somewhat satisfactory, 4: Satisfactory, and 5: Very satisfactory)

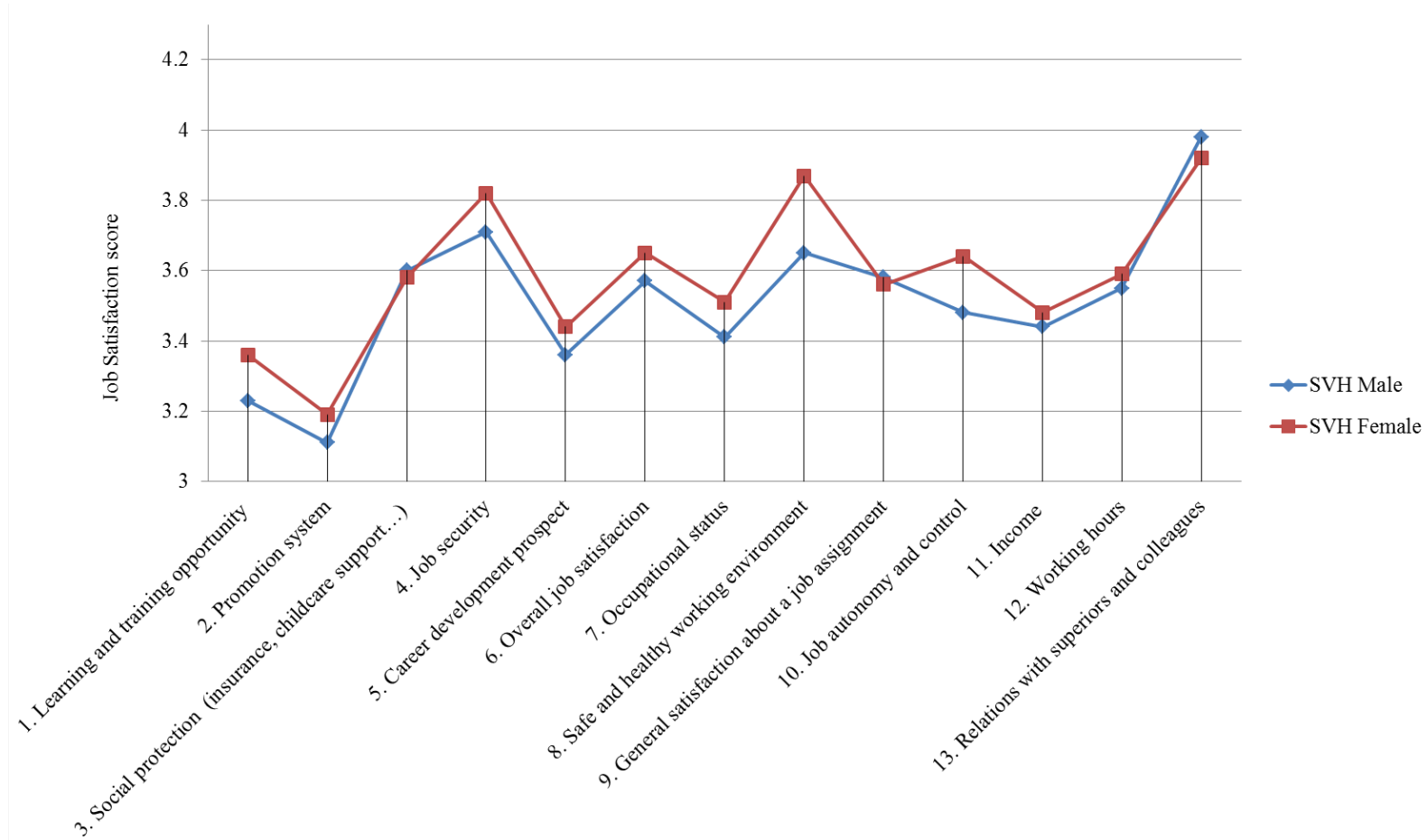


Figure 4.18 Job satisfaction for MH graduate employees on a scale of 1-5 by gender (1: Very unsatisfactory, 2: Somewhat unsatisfactory, 3: Somewhat satisfactory, 4: Satisfactory, and 5: Very satisfactory)

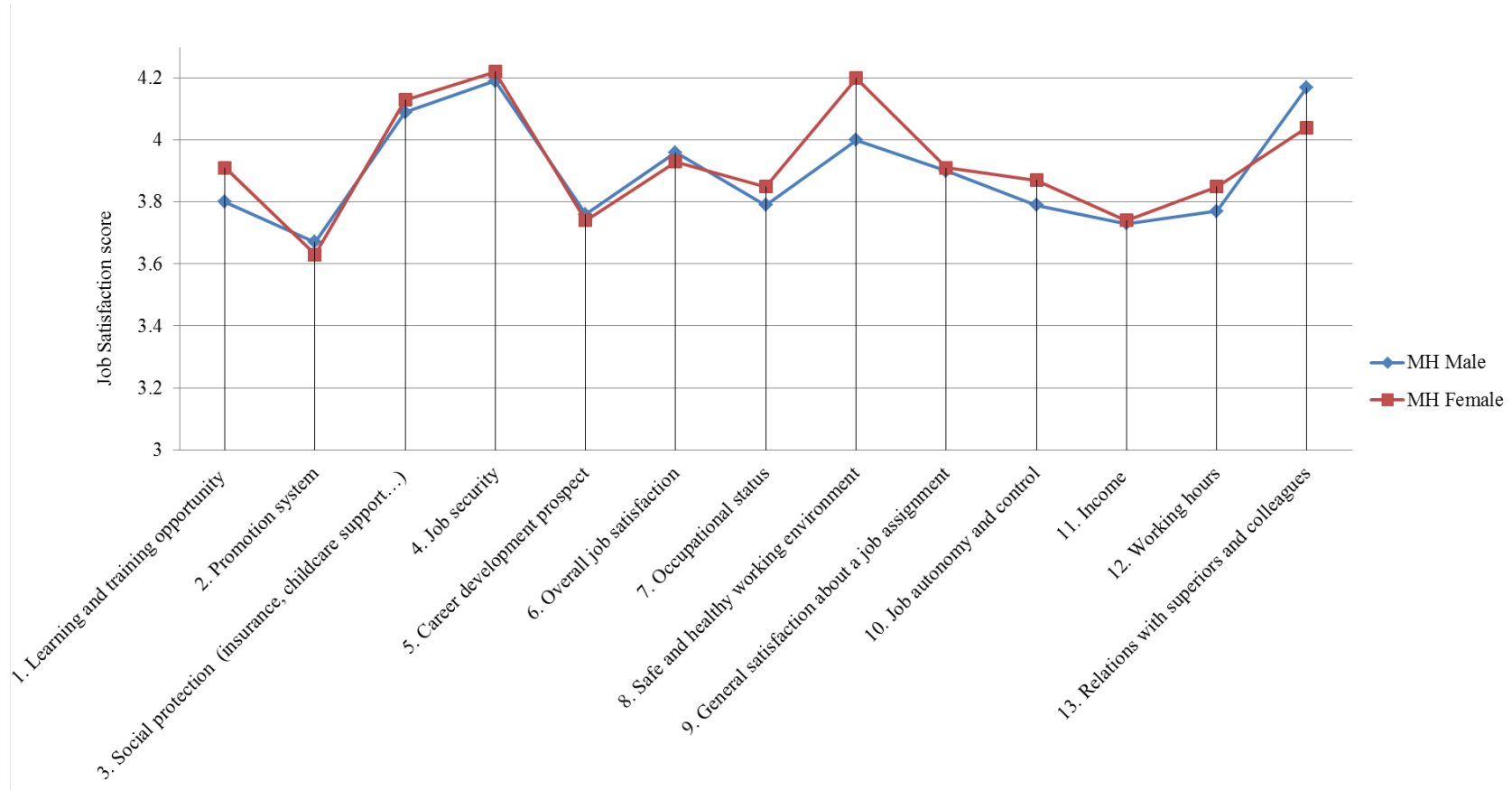


Table 4.12 13 aspects of work ranked by satisfaction scores

	SVH Total	SVH Male	SVH Female	MH Total	MH Male	MH Female
Most satisfactory	Relations with superiors and colleagues	Relations with superiors and colleagues	Relations with superiors and colleagues	Job security	Job security	Job security
	Job security	Job security	Safe and healthy Working environment	Relations with superiors and colleagues	Relations with superiors and colleagues	Safe and healthy Working environment
	Safe and healthy Working environment	Safe and healthy Working environment	Job security	Social protection	Social protection	Social protection
	Social protection	Social protection	Overall Job satisfaction	Safe and healthy Working environment	Safe and healthy Working environment	Relations with superiors and colleagues
	Overall Job satisfaction	General satisfaction about a job assignment	Job autonomy and control	Overall Job satisfaction	Overall Job satisfaction	Overall Job satisfaction
	General satisfaction about a job assignment	Overall Job satisfaction	Working hours	General satisfaction about a job assignment	General satisfaction about a job assignment	Learning and training opportunity
	Working hours	Working hours	Social protection	Learning and training opportunity	Learning and training opportunity	General satisfaction about a job assignment
	Job autonomy and control	Job autonomy and control	General satisfaction about a job assignment	Occupational status	Occupational status	Job autonomy and control
	Income	Income	Occupational status	Job autonomy and control	Job autonomy and control	Occupational status
	Occupational status	Occupational status	Income	Working hours	Working hours	Working hours
	Career development prospect	Career development prospect	Career development prospect	Career development prospect	Career development prospect	Career development prospect
	Learning and training opportunity	Learning and training opportunity	Learning and training opportunity	Income	Income	Income
Least satisfactory	Promotion system	Promotion system	Promotion system	Promotion system	Promotion system	Promotion system

In Table 4.12, on average, the top five aspects that employees from both groups are the most satisfied with are ‘Job security’, ‘Relations with superiors and colleagues’, ‘Safe and healthy working environment’, ‘Social protection’, and ‘Overall job satisfaction’. However, employees from both schools are the least satisfied with ‘Promotion system’ followed by ‘Learning and training opportunity’ among SVH graduate employees (while ‘Income’ is the second least satisfactory area among MH graduate employees) and ‘Career development prospect’.

Much of their concern for ‘Promotion system’ can be partly explained because when a candidate’s educational background is taken into consideration in a selection process of promotion and most of the candidates have a university degree or even higher, high school graduate employees are discouraged to earn promotions and find it discriminatory.

The second least satisfactory area of their job for SVH graduate employees after ‘Promotion system’ is ‘Learning and training opportunity’. This is because jobs assigned for high school graduates are often limited to an office assistance, customer service or production, and there is little chance for them to transition into another job assignments within a company.⁷⁶ Nevertheless high school graduate employees try to improve their skills through ‘Learning and training opportunity’ for their career advancement, not much support or opportunities seem to have been offered as shown in Table 4.12.

Both SVH and MH graduate employees have a relatively high level of decency

⁷⁶ Jaeryang Nam and Taehi Gwon, *Empirical studies on high school graduates’ employment trends and outcomes* (Seoul: Korea Employment Information Service (KEIS), 2012), 205.

in ‘Job security’ and ‘Social protection’ compared to other dimensions of their employment, and their satisfaction for those aspects also shows a similar result as their objective results. Regarding ‘Income’ and ‘Working hours’, although more MH graduate employees have a higher degree of decency than SVH graduate employees, their satisfaction level for ‘Income’ and ‘Working hours’ is at the bottom of rankings (see Table 4.12).

In conclusion, on average, MH graduate employees report a higher level of job satisfaction than SVH graduate employees of which results are similar to the objective results. The biggest gap between the two groups is found in ‘Learning and training opportunity’ and the smallest gap is found in ‘Relations with superiors and colleagues’. Female employees among SVH and MH graduate employees tend to report a higher level of job satisfaction than their male counterparts.

The job satisfaction gap between the two genders is bigger among SVH graduate employees than among MH graduate employees. The job satisfaction results also show that the most satisfactory and least satisfactory aspects of their work for SVH and MH graduate employees differ. However, both groups commonly responded to ‘Job security’, ‘Social protection’, ‘Relations with superiors and colleagues’ and ‘Safe and healthy working environment’ with a relatively high satisfaction score and to ‘Promotion system’, ‘Career development prospect’ with a low satisfaction score.

5. Conclusion and Outlook

5.1. Summary of the Study

This research attempts to identify and compare decency of employment between SVH and MH graduate employees according to the seven indicators proposed by ILO and the job satisfaction score. It further uncovers what percentage of employees has a decent job and what percentage of their employment meets a decent work standard.

Despite a serious underutilization of youth labor, MH graduate employees show more access to employment than SVH graduate employees. From a gender perspective, female graduates show more access to employment than male graduates in SVH and MH groups. 58.20 percent of MH graduate employees earn a decent pay while 29 percent of SVH graduate employees earn a decent pay.

In addition, SVH graduates' monthly wages are widely distributed below a decent pay threshold in the distribution of monthly pay while MH graduates' monthly wages are symmetrically distributed around the threshold. The decent pay threshold is the average monthly pay of the total labor and the pay of the respondents is very likely to be a starting salary. As SVH graduate employees stay in employment for more years, their pay distribution will also be expected to be normally distributed around the mean. However, there is an already clear pay gap captured between the two groups in their early career.

The percentages of employees working decent hours between 36 and 48 hours from SVH and MH are 43.54 and 52.98 respectively. 23 percent of SVH graduate employees and 12.76 percent of MH graduate employees work longer than 60 hours. SVH graduates employees tend to work longer hours and male workers from each

group tend to work longer hours than their female counterparts.

69.37 percent of SVH graduate employees and 89.80 percent of MH graduate employees are regular workers with a permanent contract and feel secure about their employment. Female workers in each group have better job security than their male counterparts.

76.88 percent of SVH graduate employees and 94.39 percent of MH graduate employees are insured by the four basic insurances. The unionization rates for both groups are considerably low: 6.93 percent among SVH graduate employees and 23.21 percent among MH graduate employees in which area requires the most improvement to meet the ILO standard of decent work.

Among five indicators applied to measure decency of employment for SVH and MH graduate employees, the biggest gap of decency level between the two groups is shown in 'decent hours' and 'social dialogue', followed by 'social protection', 'job security' and 'income'. Therefore, effort should be put on aspects of 'social dialogue' and 'decent hours' to make a progress toward a goal of decent work.

In terms of job satisfaction, MH graduate employees show higher satisfaction than SVH graduate employees, and female employees in each group show higher satisfaction than male counterparts. Both groups show the most satisfaction in 'Relations with superiors and colleagues' and 'Job security'. The common least satisfactory areas for both groups are 'Promotion system' and 'Career development prospect'. The biggest gap between the two groups is found in 'Learning and training opportunity', followed by 'Promotion system'. The least gap between the two groups is 'Relations with superiors and colleagues', followed by 'Working hours', and

‘Income’.

In conclusion, in terms of the quantity and quality of employment according to the decent work agenda, more MH graduate employees are employed in decent work than SVH graduate employees, and employment that MH graduate employees have fulfills more decent work indicators than that of SVH.

5.2. Policy Recommendations

MH graduate employees are employed in more decent employment in all the suggested indicators compared to SVH graduate employees and employment that MH graduate employees have satisfies more decent work standards than that of SVH, which presents MH graduate students’ more successful entry into the labor market than SVH graduate students’. By providing such information on MH graduate employees’ employment outcomes as an evidence for a career management strategy to the public, in particular, vocational school candidates and their parents, it is to be expected that the notion of vocational education associated with low academic attainment and inability to find decent work will be gradually changed. As a result, more and more talented candidates will choose a vocational education as a valuable option.

Occupations requiring a vocational education should be identified and created so that vocational high school graduates can be readily recruited in the world of work after graduation. Therefore, vocational schools should be equipped to deliver quality teaching and learning relevant to the regional and national industry development, and establish a school-industry partnership. In addition, the government and firms should make institutional changes to enhance fair treatment for high school graduate employees after they enter the job market so they are not excluded in promotions and

learning and training opportunities in which their top concerns lie as appeared in the job satisfaction.

In this study, the female workers' employment situation shows better than the male workers because employers are not willing to hire male employees who haven't completed the military duty. Among male employees, MH male graduate employees' employment situation shows better than SVH male graduate employees', which can be explained by different policy arrangements and benefits given to MH male students regarding the military service. They can postpone the military service up to four years while in employment. If such benefits are extended to SVH graduate employees, their employment situation can be expected to be improved as well.

5.3. Limitations and Suggested Areas for Further Study

There are several special considerations regarding utility and generalizability of the findings of this study. First, according to the specific nature of HSGES (High School Graduates Employment Survey) as discussed in Chapter 3, vocational high school graduates who entered a higher education or a military service were not taken into account. In addition, among the total respondents of the survey, only those who had graduated from SVH or MH with an industry major and had been in wage employment were chosen for this comparative research.

The exclusion of certain population and the sample selection may create overrepresentation of MH graduates in the analysis because a larger percentage of MH graduates enter employment right after graduation while a larger percentage of the SVH graduates are in a higher education than in employment (See Table 4.2) and the survey results also indicate that MH graduates have more access to employment than SVH graduates (See Table 3.2). Future research should therefore have a larger

population to mitigate the potential sample bias and may even want to investigate such a tendency of the MH graduate group to be overrepresented.

Last, since there were the first-time MH graduates in 2013, it is too early to talk about the effectiveness of MH program in terms of employment. Furthermore, employment of young workers such as high school graduate employees is characterized by mobility and flexibility; although they are in employment, they tend to look for a better employment opportunity. For this reason, follow-up work that can trace a career path of vocational high school graduate employees should continue in order to find out a relation between vocational education program and employability.

As this research has proved that MH graduate employees tend to have more decent work than SVH graduate employees, future studies should be undertaken to explain why the differences of decency exist in the suggested aspects of work between the two groups so that SVH can benchmark any of strategies that have brought MH more decent employment. Further, a comparative research on decency of employment between MH, college and university graduates can be studied to find out whether the Meister school program can offer students job prospects that is decent enough compared to those of college and university graduates so that students do not have to force themselves to go to college or university in order to get more decent job.

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